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Gold
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Alastair Buchan

The Great Contingency

"Is it not strange," said a French friend, "that we now regard the Jews as the great martial race and the Japanese as the world's traders. . .?"

War is the great contingency of history. Even if it only lasts sixty hours it can alter the contours of the political landscape beyond recognition. Yesterday the world's image was of little Israel hanging on to a precarious toehold on the reverse slope of the Mediterranean littoral: today it is of great swaggering Israel bestriding the Middle East. In mid-May the leaders of the Arab world were at each other's throats: in mid-June they display a precarious sense of unity. The Soviet Union has been shown up as a coward, the United States and Britain as bluffers, and France as devious, in the second major crisis of the 1960s. The United Nations has received the heaviest blow in twenty years to its authority.

The ripples of the Arab-Israel war reach at least as far as Viet Nam, deep into Africa, and probably further into Europe and the Atlantic than one would have supposed likely (especially if Mr. Wilson's cagey statement after his return from Paris on June 20 means that Britain is now trimming her Middle Eastern policy to keep it in line with France's). The next five years will be dominated by the effect of the Arab-Israel war as the last five have been dominated by the consequences of the Cuban missile crisis. All this by reason of sixty hours of combat in which relatively few people were killed and no lasting or widespread damage done to anything except military equipment.

In the foreshortened perspective of the last week of June, it is foolish to attempt any analysis of the causes, the effects, or even the course of the war. Those who are rushing into print with histories and accounts of it will probably look very silly in a year's time. The best one can do is to ask some questions and offer some comments on possible answers.

Alastair Buchan *is the Director of the Institute for Strategic Studies in London. Among his articles in* Encounter *are "An Asian Balance of Power?" (December 1966), and "The Age of Insecurity" (June and August 1963).*

First, *was the war inevitable?* If one accepts the gist of much of modern strategic analysis and bargaining theory, exemplified for instance by Thomas Schelling's recent *Arms and Influence*, one would have said that there was a good chance of it not happening. Discounting the question of great power influence for the moment, one of the safety factors in the Middle East seemed to be the fact that all the contestants—Nasser, Eshkol, Attassi, Hussein—were old hands at the game. They had not only penetrated each other's intelligence systems years ago and knew well the material facts about each other's capabilities, but also knew how to interpret each other's moves. But, of course, writers like Schelling have been mostly thinking in terms of the bilateral Soviet-American confrontation; and one clear difference between the Middle Eastern situation (or Europe in 1914) and, say, Cuba in 1962 was the number of players involved.

It is clear that Israel was emboldened by the evidence of Arab disunity between November and February to adopt a much more stringent policy of reprisals against Syria and Jordan for raids into her territory. But there is little evidence that right up to the middle of May either Egypt or Israel intended to pick a fight with each other. As late as May 20 the Defence Correspondent of *The Times* was reporting from Tel Aviv that Israel's war was with Syria and that there was little likelihood of an Egyptian-Israel conflict.

> The Egyptian Army in Sinai is seen in Tel Aviv mainly as a defensive force, not organised for invasion but more to stop a possible Israel invasion similar to the Sinai campaign. A big land campaign is thus ruled out.

Moreover, right up to the middle of May all the Middle Eastern experts, of which I am not one,

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were saying that the real conflict was between the traditionalist and the socialist states, between Syria and Jordan, between Egypt and Saudi Arabia, and that they were merely using their respective troubles with Israel as a stick to beat each other. It is to be presumed that Nasser saw his position with his own world slipping so rapidly, especially in Syria, that he felt impelled to act, and on May 18 ordered mobilisation and demanded the withdrawal of the United Nations forces (UNEF).

It is when the element of the unexpected is introduced that "the great game" begins to deteriorate into a crisis. Can Nasser ever have expected that UNEF would be withdrawn so meekly? Obviously he had not cultivated the good will of the Yugoslavs and the Indians, two important components of UNEF, for so many years for nothing. But Dag Hammarskjöld had left him in no doubt that the Secretary-General would not withdraw UNEF simply when Egypt requested it. He made it clear in all his comments after 1956 that since UNEF had been set up by bilateral agreement between the UN and Egypt, there were two parties to the bargain. "The consequence of such a bilateral declaration is that were either side to act unilaterally in refusing continued presence or deciding on withdrawal . . . an exchange of views would be called for towards harmonising the position."[1] Could Nasser have deduced that U Thant was so unhappy in his job as a result of Viet Nam, so fed up with being the toad beneath the harrow of power politics which he had not the personality to dominate, that he would simply accede to a demand from Cairo? And the real importance of UNEF was not its presence in Gaza but at Sharm El Sheikh. So Nasser had no option but to occupy it and then close the Straits, polishing up the tired arguments of nearly twenty years ago that the lack of a formal peace treaty with Israel permitted him to break the most fundamental law of the sea, the right of innocent passage.

But after he had occupied Sharm El Sheikh on May 21 he could still reasonably expect that one other circumstance would enable him to resume his role as the leader of an embattled Arab world without actually risking war with Israel. The United States and Britain, as the principal maritime powers, were on record as expressing their insistence that the Straits of Tiran remain open to all shipping. But, whereas Dwight Eisenhower in 1957 had virtually forced the Straits open by sending American ships through and reminding Israel that she had the right to convoy her own ships, Lyndon Johnson in 1967 merely huffed and puffed about the right of innocent passage being "a vital interest of the international community," but did nothing. He appeared to take fright when the British suggested more forceful action. The other maritime nations shied away from action, and the large majority of nations who have little connection with the sea saw no reason to get agitated. So Nasser was left face to face with an infuriated, mobilised Israel, with no intervening hand between them, unable to demobilise or in any way de-fuse the crisis without losing his increasingly precarious leadership of the Arab world. As Raymond Aron pointed out in *Figaro* on May 29, "*La combinaison américaine de propos fermes et de passivité rejetait sur Israël la responsabilité majeure. . . .*"

DID THIS MAKE WAR INEVITABLE? Apparently the Egyptians thought it did. On the 26th of May, ten days before fighting broke out, a remarkable article by Hassanein Haikal, Nasser's closest confidant and spokesman, appeared in *El Ahram*. War between Egypt and Israel, he said, was inevitable and could break out at any time. Israel's whole position was based on force and now, for the first time, the Arabs had challenged this position.

> I am confident that for many reasons, chiefly the psychological, Israel cannot accept or remain indifferent to what has taken place. . . . It has to deal a blow. We have to be ready for it, to minimise its effect as much as possible. Then it will be our turn to deal the second blow, which we will deliver with the utmost possible effectiveness.

The Haikal article makes considerable nonsense of the views expressed not only in the Soviet Union but also in the West, that Israel somehow took an unfair advantage of Egypt and Jordan (with which Nasser had been working rapidly to develop a co-ordinated operational plan since the third week in May) by a heavy pre-emptive air strike on Monday, 5 June. Every player in the Middle East game knew that if challenged beyond a certain point Israel would strike first: Tel Aviv had always been explicit on this point and had become almost categorical on the subject once the Straits were closed and Moshe Dayan had been invited into

[1] Summary Study in *United Nations Forces: A legal study*. By DEREK BOWETT. Stevens, 1964, p. 421.

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the government. But it does raise the question: did Nasser really think he could defeat Israel? For he clearly knew that, though he had been goaded into breaking the international restraints on Middle Eastern war by Syria, it was Egypt that would bear the brunt of the attack. Or was he whistling to keep his courage up? Or did he, unaware of the growing cautiousness of both super powers, place too much reliance on Soviet assurances?

WE MAY NEVER KNOW the answer, but on paper certainly he had no reason for despair. He had 1,200 tanks to Israel's 800 and his superiority in modern medium tanks was higher still. He had the same superiority in combat aircraft, and some deadly Russian missile-firing PT boats, whose possible use against Tel Aviv with gas warheads the Israeli Government had reason to fear. If even the loosest co-ordination between the Arab states on Israel's border could be effected, and Nasser now had some control over King Hussein, he had a reasonable prospect of destroying a great deal of Israel's military potential when Israel attacked—perhaps even of driving her into the sea.

WAS AN ISRAELI VICTORY INEVITABLE? It does not seem to me that it was. The victory in the air was the product of superb pilot training; the pilots mattered more than aircraft, though the French have a right to be proud of the performance of these (no doubt with beneficial effects on France's arms deals all over the world). But it was also the result of gross negligence on the part of the Egyptians and the Syrians, for everyone in the Middle East had known for years that if it came to war, whichever side struck first would try and catch the other's aircraft on the ground. Viewed from a purely professional standpoint it must be rated as one of the greatest feats of arms in modern history: I can think of no engagement so decisive in either of the World Wars. I, for one, thought the Israelis were indulging in the usual numbers game when they claimed to have destroyed 350 aircraft on the first day; but they were right. Ironically, the major powers have recently been losing faith in the value of interceptor aircraft in a ground attack role.

Was it inevitable that the land battle should go the way of the air battle? Probably, but not for the same reasons. In Sinai an armoured force is extremely vulnerable without air cover. But it was crazy to pile up a mass of Egyptian armour on the Israeli frontier, much of it on roads from which it was difficult to diverge, much of it uncamouflaged, and without enough infantry. Along with the Russian training manuals the Egyptians accepted Soviet tactical doctrine designed entirely for European conditions. Presumably the best infantry was in the Yemen. This was not a second Alamein, but a battle between an amateur and a professional army. The heroes of the Israeli army are not Dayan, not even the grizzled and able professionals like Rabin and Narkiss, but the maintenance mechanics who kept its aging tanks and guns in perfect running order for years.

Did Israel's military gains conform to her political aims? I rather doubt it. Her primary objective was punitive, to destroy a growing military threat to her existence by crippling the Arab armies and air forces and only secondarily to rectify frontiers. I feel fairly sure that she did not want to occupy Sinai (except, of course for Sharm El Sheikh), or even Gaza. But so disorganised was the Egyptian army that the process of destroying it involved traversing the width of Sinai instead of fighting a decisive engagement near her own frontiers. There would, I suppose, have been a very strong temptation to retake the Old City once Jordan had joined in the fray, but again I wonder whether many Israelis wanted as much of Jordanian Palestine as in fact they ended up with. It is not easy to stop a victorious army.

On the other hand, Israel was determined to have the heights above the Sea of Galilee from which Syrian shelling had been coming for years, and because the Syrians would not show fight was forced to take the initiative after two UN cease fire resolutions had been passed. Certainly her territorial gains have landed Israel with a task of political innovation for which two decades of fighting for the *status quo* have hardly prepared her government.

How do the great powers emerge from this crisis? Not well. One is tempted to say that they can stoke up a local conflict but cannot control it. Neither Moscow nor Washington could restrain their friends, and in the end earned their contempt. Certainly, the Middle East war should cause second thoughts about the value of carriers or mobile forces for "intervention" in the cause of peace, for there was no possible way that the United States or Britain could have

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intervened to part the combatants except with active Soviet support. All that their forces in the Mediterranean and the Red Sea did was to expose them to a charge of collusion. Fortunately, the presence of Russian radar and missile ships between the British and American fleets and the shore made the accusation implausible.

Keeping the peace or preventing war is a more complex process, to which deployed great power force has only partial relevance. In the Middle East, where both prestige and security are so closely linked to the level of armaments, the only useful co-ordinated or parallel action the great powers can take in the long run is to keep the level down, however much short-term leverage supplying one side or the other may give them. This the Russians will not accept, and since they will not, the other three powers have not been averse to mixing business with policy by arming the adversaries of the Soviet Union's friends. De Gaulle's policy, animated by anti-Americanism more than any concern for peace, seems to mark the line between elder-statesmanship and senility.

WILL *the balance of power in the Middle East now become a nuclear one?* It largely depends on how the Russians rearm the defeated Arab powers. For the past two years I have been increasingly impressed with the possibility that Israel might become the sixth nuclear power, though her resources are modest and she could only accumulate a stockpile gradually. This possibility might become a certainty if Russia rearms Egypt and Syria with long-range means of delivery which could threaten Tel Aviv, Jerusalem, and Haifa, and make the defence of Israel's borders an inadequate form of security. A nuclear programme would be a tremendous strain on Israel's resources, and I have a hunch—unprovable as yet—that one of the reasons she decided to strike hard at the Arab armies and air forces now, was to avoid the necessity of facing the nuclear option shortly. Whether she has been successful depends largely on whether the United States —which has pursued the most responsible policy in relation to arming the Middle East—can find a means of saving Russia's face, and this in turn may depend on some modification of American policy in Viet Nam, though there is no obvious connection between Soviet influence in the Middle East and the danger of war in the Far East. Unfortunately, the Chinese hydrogen bomb, forcing Moscow to revive its competition with Peking for influence in the third world, could not have come at a worse time.

A nuclear balance in the Middle East might be more stable than that which has developed over the past ten years. There is no form of military balance so liable to explode as one that depends on a large number of high-performance aircraft on each side: this was the danger in the central East-West balance in the late 1950s. But, first, it would probably involve the great powers directly either in giving binding guarantees to each side in the Middle East, which would be dangerous in so volatile an area, or in joint guarantees for which they do not seem ready. Second, as Aron pointed out many years ago, a nuclear balance of power leads to a "deceleration of history" which froze the evolution of political relationships between the two halves of Europe for twenty years, and might freeze the prospect of a rational settlement in the Middle East for two or ten generations.

The greatest danger to the Middle East may not be as the cockpit of World War III, but in its steady decline in prosperity and significance. If there is no settlement, if these petty Napoleons, Nasser, Dayan, Hussein, strut around indefinitely, a technological world will find increasing oil and natural gas resources elsewhere, faster and bigger ships will go round the Cape to the great profit of South Africa, investment resources will be withheld, and it will become a larger, warmer Ireland, nursing ancestral grievances.

This is the moment—it may not recur—for the industrial world to prove that it has a high interest in the direct and final political settlements that will enable the whole region to prosper. There are six problems to be confronted: frontiers; maritime access; refugees; arms; water; the status of Jerusalem. Obviously if there is to be any settlement of these questions, some of it will have to be done by direct negotiation. But if the major powers can make no contribution to the solution of any of them, then we are not in a polycentric world but in an anarchic one. There is great scope for UN action in the area in patrolling frontiers, manning narrow waters, running Jerusalem or a regional water authority. But it will need a new Secretary-General and the support of the whole developed world if it is to have any chance of success.

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Count Harry Kessler

In the 'Twenties

Diary of a Vanished Age (II)

Paris, 2 January, 1926

AT LUNCH WITH Misia Sert the conversation mainly about acquaintances, Diaghilev, Cocteau, and so on. When I spoke of the miracle of new life given to the Russian Ballet by war and revolution, Misia told me how badly off Diaghilev had been during the war. He nearly starved in Spain and waited months before the French government would give him an entry permit so that Sert could go to Barcelona to fetch him. Just before they got to the frontier on the way back, Sert asked Diaghilev whether he had any compromising papers with him. No, nothing, he never carried anything compromising. Well, just have a look, said Sert, and make sure you have nothing in your pockets. Only a few letters. But what letters? Finally Diaghilev brought out a thick packet of papers among which were two letters from Mata Hari who had just been arrested....

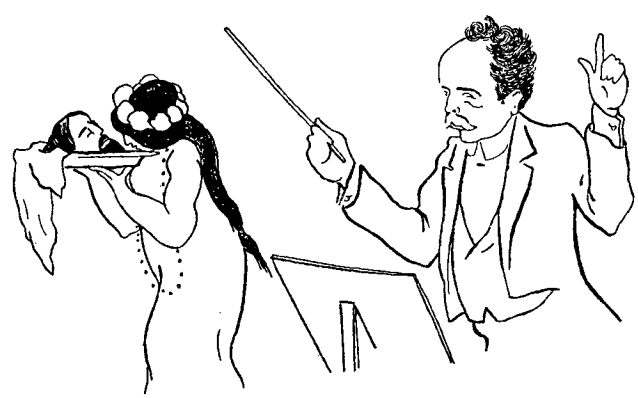
Cocteau's poem about Radiguet was sharply criticised by Valentine Victor-Hugo and Misia. Misia said it was quite untrue that poor little Radiguet had died gazing into Cocteau's eyes. On the contrary, the dreadful thing was he had died completely alone in hospital. *"On a fait le vide autour de lui,"* because he had typhus and practically nobody went to see him. Cocteau had only been once or twice. They all agreed on one thing: that Radiguet had belonged in the company of the great, with Voltaire, Balzac, and Stendhal. Misia said Cocteau had been converted to the Church, a missionary had made him feel that he was a *"saligaud."* Since then Cocteau had become angelic. Valentine Hugo believes Cocteau's *Orphée* is a masterpiece.

A NOTE *about the author appears on page 96 of this number.*

Berlin, 19 January, 1926

FIRST NIGHT of Richard Strauss' *Elektra*, conducted by Bruno Walter. Delicate, rhythmic, tempestuous *tour de force* by the orchestra. Clytemnestra marvellous, but Elektra too fat. Behind us was Richard Strauss with his wife.

Pauline (Strauss) asked us to supper after the



RICHARD STRAUSS

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performance, and she showed herself during the meal at her best and worst. Motherly concern that everybody should have enough to eat, cramming plates with tidbits and at the same time, disagreeable, vulgar, and tactless. She dismissed Buechner's play *Woyzeck*—not the opera—on the ground that it was impossible to feel any interest in a dirty little non-commissioned officer. What concern could she have for such things? And she asked it just like a General's daughter. I said: *Carmen* was a story about an N.C.O.; and she said, yes, but romantic, Spanish, and by Merimée. I said it did not seem to me that a German N.C.O. was less worthy of respect than a Spanish one and, in any case, I rated Faust's Gretchen higher than Mary, Queen of Scots. Pauline whispers secretively: she had heard "that Graf Kessler had become quite a Red!" "Oh, I am simply a conventional little democrat." Pauline: "How can a Count be a democrat?—you are fouling your own nest!" "Forgive me, Madame, but I am the best judge of whether I am fouling my own nest."

Strauss was becoming more and more uncomfortable and, finally, intervened to end the conversation, explaining to me that his wife knew nothing of politics and I should not take any notice of what she said. Later Pauline, who gathered that she had gone a bit far, drew me into the study to tell me about her political plans. She explained, all in a strong Bavarian dialect, that she was an aristocrat, a General's daughter. The idea was to make a South German State out of Bavaria and Austria, of course with the blessing of the Bavarian Royal family. She appeared to think that the brilliance of her plans would make us friends again. But I said though I was a North German I still did not want the southerners to starve, and it would be better to worry about making a United States of Europe than to think up sentimental new countries. She started on European unity with delight at once. What a ridiculous female, common, sentimental, impossible. A cook.

Grossmann

MAX REINHARDT

7 February, 1926

THE POET Vollmoeller, as always very amusing, cranky and sharp. He explained D'Annunzio's attitude to Mussolini. D'Annunzio was convinced Mussolini had tried to have him murdered: the woman who had thrown D'Annunzio out of a window had been sent by Mussolini to liquidate him.

Weimar, 11 February, 1926

WHEN I CALLED this afternoon, Frau Foerster-Nietzsche burst out with the news of her friendship with Mussolini. Had I heard of it? I said I had and regretted it, for it compromised her brother. Mussolini was a danger to Europe, to that Europe her brother had longed for, the Europe of all "good Europeans." The poor old lady was a little upset, but changed the subject so that the conversation was pleasant again. She is almost eighty, and it is beginning to be noticeable.

13 February, 1926

I GAVE a dinner party at home, and after my guests had left at about one o'clock Max Reinhardt telephoned from Vollmoeller's and asked me to go over. Miss Josephine Baker was there and they were having a splendid time. So I drove over to Vollmoeller's harem in the Pariser Platz and found Reinhardt and Huldschinsky surrounded by half-a-dozen naked girls, including Miss Baker who was also naked but for a pink muslin loincloth, and Sammy Fischer's young niece dressed up as a boy in a dinner-jacket.

Josephine Baker danced brilliant mime and caricatures entirely in her own style, like an archaic Egyptian figure doing acrobatics. This is how the dancers must have danced for Solomon and Tutankhamen. She went on for hours without tiring, constantly inventing fresh for-

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mations, like a happy child at play. She does not even get warm, and keeps a cool dry fresh skin. A bewitching creature—but almost completely unerotic. One thinks as little of sex when watching her as if she were a beautiful animal. The naked girls slouched or skipped about among the four or five men in dinner-jackets, and the little Landshoff girl, who really did look like a handsome boy, danced the latest jazz to the gramophone with Miss Baker. Vollmoeller wanted to write a ballet for Josephine Baker and planned to finish it this very night for Reinhardt: a ballet about cocottes. I said I must write her a pantomime on the theme of the Song of Solomon, Baker as the Shulamite and the Landshoff girl (with whom she was now lying embraced) as Solomon or the Shulamite's young lover. Miss Baker in the costume (or lack of it) of oriental antiquity and Solomon in a dinner-jacket—a completely perverse mixture between the antique and the modern, with jazz music mixed with oriental (perhaps by Richard Strauss). Reinhardt was enthusiastic, and so was Vollmoeller, and we arranged to dine together with the little Landshoff girl and I would invite Miss Baker too and we would fix it all up. Home at 4 a.m.

Serge

JOSEPHINE BAKER

15 February, 1926

THE EINSTEINS dined with me, and Frau Einstein told me that her husband had at last collected the two gold medals awarded him by the Royal Society and the Astronomical Society of England from the Foreign Office. Later when she asked him what the medals looked like, he did not know—for he had not even opened the package. He had no time for such trifles and will not even wear his *"Pour le Mérite."* At the last meeting of the Academy someone pointed out that he was not wearing the ribbon and supposed that his wife had forgotten to lay it out for him. Einstein answered, "Not forgotten. No, not forgotten. I didn't want to wear it...."

22 February, 1926

MET Elsa Brandstroem, who had been Providence itself for our prisoners of war during and after the war in Russia. A tall, striking, well-bred Swedish blonde, a Nordic Joan of Arc. Quite uncomplicated, but strong character. For hundreds of thousands of men she was the only *human being*. She makes on me the same deeply moving impression that Nansen made. She was alone in Siberia for five-and-a-half years, two of them cut off from all contact with her family, was terribly ill with typhus, twice condemned to death as a spy, and still as simple, as full of gentleness as a child, and as lovely as a young countess at a ball. It is human beings like this, who turn their strength to goodness and yet remain strong and unsentimental, who are the real *Übermenschen*. It is not that she saved the lives of thousands but that she saved their faith in humanity that is the deeply moving thing about her.

24 February, 1926

THE DINNER for our new Ballet. At midnight the little Negro dancer Josephine Baker arrived. I had had the library cleared for her to dance, but she was out of sorts and sat in a corner, apparently embarrassed by her nakedness in front of the other women. Not until I began to tell Max Reinhardt the first part of the Ballet did she recover from her shyness. The story was to be of a young dancer bought by the young Solomon, who when he sees her beauty

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heaps gifts and jewels on her. He takes off his own magnificent robes to dress her. Gradually his glorious dancer disappears from his sight while he himself becomes more and more naked. Finally she is veiled entirely from him. At the end of the scene a dinner-jacketed young lover enters....

Reinhardt said the scene was dramatically and choreographically so strong that he felt it ought to end there; the tension could not be raised further. Miss Baker was enchanted and insisted on knowing when she could start dancing it. She began to make tentative grotesque movements, strongly expressionist, in front of the big Maillol sculpture. It was clear that she was taking the sculpture as a protagonist, stared at it for some time, imitated its pose, talked to it, wound herself about it in grotesque attitudes, clearly disturbed by the massive force and sternness of its presence; then began to dance about it with caricatured grandeur of movement, a child-like priestess playing and making fun of its Goddess. Obviously the Maillol figure was much more real and interesting to her than Reinhardt, or me, or any of us. Genius to genius. Suddenly she dropped the dance and began to dance her own Negro turns, reaching a climax when one of the men tried to join her dancing and she fell to imitating his every movement, turning what he was unable to express into inspired clowning and grotesquerie, something between an Egyptian wall-relief and a mechanical doll made by George Grosz.

28 February, 1926

HEARD Richard Strauss conduct his own *Frau ohne Schatten* to tremendous applause, but could not go on with him to supper (he looked tired from holding concerts and making money) for I had already promised to go to Vollmoeller's again, to see Josephine Baker. He had collected an extraordinary crowd again. Nobody knew who anyone was. A *déclassé* atmosphere which he feels becomes him as a *déclassé* poet. Women in all stages of undress: one doesn't catch their names or know whether they are "little friends" of his, whores, or ladies. Jewish young men who could be ballet-masters or publishers. Young actresses being "discovered." Among them a few people one knows. The gramophone rasped popular tunes without pause and Josephine Baker sat on the sofa eating "hot dogs" instead of dancing. It went on like this until three when I took my leave. Altogether a hopeless atmosphere, almost tragic, for Vollmoeller really has talent.

22 March, 1926

WENT FOR THE FIRST time to the new club, a "Society for Politics, Science, and Art," and found there Johannes R. Becher, George Grosz, Erwin Piscator, and others. George Grosz said he had recently turned to painting again, after only drawing for the last few years. He wanted, as he said, to paint "modern historical pictures," political pictures, something after the style of Hogarth.

Paris, 1 June, 1926

CALLED ON Baby Goldschmidt-Rothschild who received me in bed, pink damask sheets, blue pyjamas, Chinese bed upholstered in yellow. Like the set for a play about adultery. Curt Bois, the actor, arrived at the same time as myself....

In the evening the Russian Ballet, *Pastorale*, by Auric. I am cross with Helene (von Nostitz) who forced herself on a party given by Misia Sert for supper after the Ballet on a boat moored in the Seine. Misia was polite but cool. Helene had given the excuse for coming with me that Nicolas Nabokov had invited her. Diaghilev was there too; it was the opening of a new dance-bar started by some young Polish painters which is being patronised by Misia Sert, the Baroness Rothschild, and so on. An improvised band of the young painters played jazz very well, but deafeningly. The electricity was not working so that we ate and danced by the light of candles stuck in bottlenecks. Food and drink bad and fantastically expensive—150 francs for a bottle of champagne. Finally the *Garderobe* collapsed, so that everybody had to search for his own things from the disastrous muddle of coats and hats. The place was full of Polish counts and Russian dancers. In the mysterious shimmer of a few candles everyone circled around, Helene with Goertz, Lifar with Misia, and Diaghilev came to sit with us and tried to tell me more details of the Spanish dancer Garcia against the frightful row. Rain and wind tore at the matchboard walls as if in competition with the jazz. All we needed was for the hulk to spring a leak to take this Polish affair to its dramatic and logical conclusion.

5 June, 1926

DINNER AT Martin du Gard's, with Edmond Jaloux, Paul Valéry, and others. Spotless, completely modern apartment, just like an interior

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decorator's show-window, ice-cold and unlived-in. Valéry, a small thin man with artistically disordered grey hair, deep-set eyes, and a quiet musical voice, was being maliciously spiteful at table about Cocteau and the fashionable "Thomist School" (Maritain *et al.*).

6 June, 1926

I DROVE Helene to Meudon to Jacques Maritain who wanted to meet her. On the way she asked me what the word *"pédéraste"* meant which she had heard. I advised her to ask her husband.

Later I went to see Nicolas Nabokov and found him in a wretched pension behind the Panthéon. Dirty evil-smelling staircase, a tiny room with only a piano, an unmade couch on which he obviously slept, a chair, and a few photographs on the walls. An impression of dreadful poverty which his appearance in public —a well-groomed exterior and a *grand-seigneur* manner—gave no hint of. However, he received me without the least embarrassment as if he were my host in his own mansion. Then he played a cantata which he has composed to verses of Lomonosov, and I was deeply impressed. The contrast between the work of genius and his wretched surroundings was shocking. Nabokov spoke of his contempt for French music and came out vigorously against its oriental, ethnographic, exotic elements. He also criticised jazz. He said the reason he detested exoticism in music is that he loves Bach. He includes in his dislike the ethnographic type of Russian music—Rimsky-Korsakov and so on. Borodin was the only one who had been able to lift himself a little out of this orientalism into the region of pure music; Nabokov's gods are Bach and Mozart. Music is at its highest when it *"entre dans le temple,"* becomes religion. He said I must certainly meet Maritain who is the most interesting person in France; he is much impressed by the Thomists. He quoted a rather stupid remark of Stravinsky's with pleasure: "On the one hand, we have Luther, Protestantism, Kant, and that old cow Sand—on the other hand, Catholicism and good wine." But in spite of this rather immature and excessive Catholic radicalism, Nabokov made the impression of a young giant of real genius.

13 June, 1926

LUNCH WITH Maillol in Marly, and during the meal Gauguin's friend Daniel de Monfred came in (he has gone quite white). When I spoke of "Les Ambassadeurs"—where I saw Florence Mills' Negro review yesterday—Maillol said, "It was at the Ambassadeurs that I got my first job when I arrived in Paris. I did the decorations there." In those days he was *sans le sou* and friends took him along to help with the painting and earn some money. In the end he was the only one of them who got paid because the owners sacked him on the spot for being useless at his job and paid him off.

Berlin, 14 June, 1927

Gulbransson

GERHART HAUPTMANN

DINNER at S. Fischer's, with the Gerhart Hauptmanns, the Einsteins, the critic Alfred Kerr and his wife, and so on.

I don't know how we came to speak of astrology but Hauptmann tried to defend it to Einstein, or rather he asked Einstein what he thought of astrology, obviously expecting that Einstein would allow it some small meaning. But Einstein rejected it as sharply and completely as his tolerant nature was able to do. The discoveries of Copernicus had finally put an end to the anthropocentric view of the world, according to which Heaven and Earth revolve around mankind; that was probably the greatest blow that mankind's notion of itself had ever received; the earth was, so to speak, provincialised by this discovery, instead of being the chief and central point of everything; even the Passion of Christ and the Crucifixion were to be seen in a quite new light.

Kerr constantly interrupted Einstein's conversation with Hauptmann with witticisms which he thought were clever (they were not funny at all). He was particularly amused by the subject of God. I tried to quiet him and said he could not unnecessarily offend Einstein who was very pious.

"What?" said Kerr, "It isn't possible! I really must ask him about that.... *Lieber Professor*! I hear you are supposed to be very religious."

Calmly and with perfect dignity, Einstein answered, "Certainly, you could call it that. When we try to examine nature with our

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limited means, there is always something behind what we can grasp as coherent: something subtle, intangible, and inexplicable. Awe of this force beyond anything we can grasp is my religion, and to that extent I am religious."

Before that I had remarked that his own discoveries were just as revolutionary as those of Tycho Brahe and Copernicus in their effects on our view of the world. He denied this forcefully, almost annoyed. "My discoveries are not in the least revolutionary."

Hauptmann said across the table to me during dinner when I commented on his resemblance to Goethe: "Yes, I am indeed a son of Goethe." When I looked astonished at this he modified it a little and said he was one of the same family, and was also a blood relation of Alexander von Humboldt. This "close relationship" with Goethe and von Humboldt seems to have become a mystic belief of Hauptmann's.

Zürich, 5 July, 1927

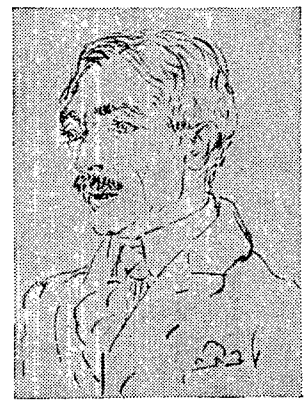
An exhibition of Kokoschka's works. His talent is that he catches the delicacy and subtlety of human expression (especially in the eyes, mouth, and hands). He disguises and yet emphasises this, with a completely extraneous coarseness and brutality.

Berlin, 11 August, 1927

I saw the American war film *What Price Glory?* —the best film about war I have ever seen and the only one that has the courage to show war as it really is, in the round and from all sides without any concealment. Several times the audience broke into stormy applause.

Paris, 6 September, 1927

Went to ask Paul Valéry to translate Virgil's *Georgics* for me. Valéry, with his carefully parted silver-grey hair and elegant black suit, wearing the rosette of the Legion of Honour, is like an old Marquis. He is too busy for translations and in any case he does not care for the *Georgics*. He says he knows nothing about country life: only the sea and vineyards. So much so that Mallarmé once had to explain to him what wheat was. Then it was —in 1898—that Mallarmé had coined one of his most beautiful phrases. He was visiting Mallarmé in the country in late summer when the wheat was already golden, and as they walked through a wheat field Valéry asked Mallarmé what that grass was. Mallarmé: *"Mais, mon cher, c'est du blé"* and then after a pause, while he gazed at the golden corn (and obviously thinking of the coming concert season in Paris in which he was much interested)—*"C'est le premier coup de cymbales de l'automne."* Valéry then recommended André Gide as translator for the *Georgics*—since he had always taken an interest in agriculture.



Picasso

Paul Valéry

Speaking of his own work he said he had not done anything that interested him for five years, only fulfilled commissions. Until 1917 nobody took any notice of him; then he suddenly became the fashion and since then he has not been his own master any more. I remarked, in order to flatter him, "That is the bitterness of fame." "That is what everybody tells me and I have often promised myself to strangle the next person who says it to me."

My general impression is of a *grand seigneur* of the old régime, a philosopher and a merchant mixed together fairly harmoniously, and spiced with intellect and malice. Form and insight are the brilliant crust covering unclear depths, undefinable and, perhaps, deliberately camouflaged.

Paris, 15 September, 1927

The unfortunate Isadora Duncan was killed yesterday by her own shawl which caught in the rear wheel of a car and strangled her. How fateful—the shawl which was so much a part of her dancing has caused her death; her piece of stage property has had its revenge. She was surrounded by tragedy: her two small children killed in a motor accident, her husband (Yessenin) committed suicide, and she herself through this object which was so much a part of her art, now lies dead.

The evening before the death of her children I was in her box at the Russian ballet, and she

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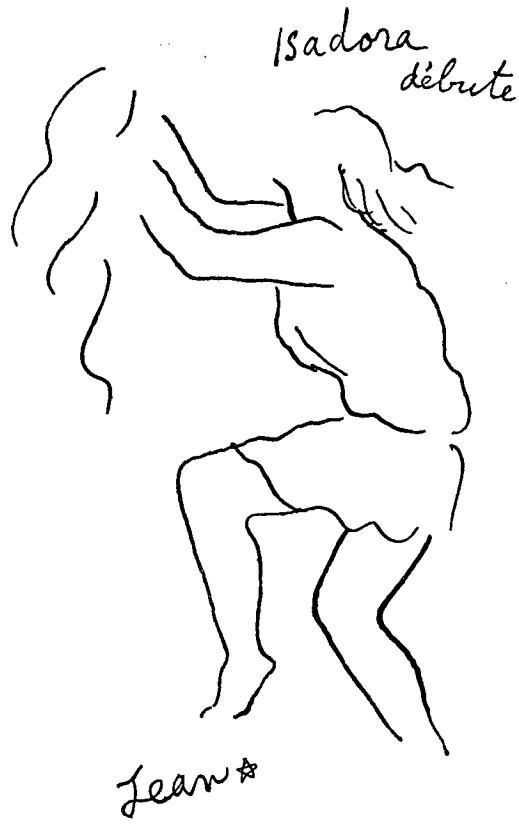
invited me to Neuilly for lunch the next day so that the children could dance for me; but I was unable to go. I have always had the feeling that if I had gone to lunch the children might not have been killed. Poor Isadora! I did not have a great opinion of her as a dancer in her early days; she was clumsy, amateurish, and uncultivated. She learned a lot from Gordon Craig. Later she asked me to her house and danced for me, and when I expressed my genuine admiration she replied in her Americanised French—which was somehow like her Californian notion of Greek art—"When you saw me before I was not a virtuoso and knew nothing about dancing, but now...."

The first time I ever met her was in Berlin. It was snowing and slushy. We met in the hallway as she arrived and I was leaving. She wore a wide mauve cape which reached to the ground and beneath it, bare feet, although (at that moment) the feet were in galoshes. She took off the galoshes in the hall and stepped, to my great surprise, barefooted into the salon. She became a protégée of Countess Harrach, in those days the most beautiful woman at the Court in Berlin and a friend of the extremely prudish Empress. The Empress asked for advice if it wasn't immoral for a lady to go about barefoot. The lady-in-waiting (who told me the story the next day) reassured her, and that was how it came about that a sort of Christian Ladies' Club was formed in support of Isadora. It went splendidly until it could no longer be ignored that Isadora, the Vestal Virgin, was very shortly to have a child. At which point the club collapsed in a burst of thunder and lightning and Isadora abruptly left Berlin.

Poor Isadora, she could never free herself from something conventional and schoolmarmish, however much she tried—with free love and choosing fathers for her children—to escape the narrowness of Puritan-Americanism in her art. And yet she was a real artist, and her art and tragedy were just as much a part of her as her Californian small-town nature. The dance, which we now include among the arts, and even the Russian Ballet, would not have been possible without her. She changed things. Her death could have been a sketch for Holbein's *Totentanz*.



26 September, 1927

Eric Gill came to see me to collect some money. He had left London yesterday without any money to bring his little boy to school in France. As a footnote to his eccentric eroticism, he asked me in front of his 10-year-old son where one could buy erotic photographs in Paris. He also said it was high time to create works of art that would destroy morality which was poisoning us all. I laughed and asked him what his friend the Abbot of Ash would say to that. Gill replied that he would disapprove of it. But all art is a revolt against accepted morals and consists of two elements, a moral and an anti-moral which struggle with each other.

Weimar, October 1927

Frau Foerster-Nietzsche was full of the approaching Nietzsche Congress at which Oswald Spengler was due to lecture. When I told her I might not be able to take part owing to a previous engagement with the Hauptmanns she looked offended and suggested that Hauptmann might come too. Then she spoke of her dear friend Mussolini who has become the comfort of her old age and who

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recently sent her greetings via the German consul. Out of politeness I did not comment. In contrast to her crush on Mussolini, she then proclaimed her belief in the "United States of Europe," of which her brother had been one of the first advocates.

I had before this excused myself when she had invited me to lunch with Spengler. Since she had written to ask me the reason, I was bound in truth to answer that I would rather not meet Spengler in a private circle because of his polemical habits and intellectual arrogance. The next day Frau Foerster-Nietzsche made no fuss about my attitude to Spengler but emphasised her own friendship with him. Apart from that she was, as always, charming and hospitable. Unfortunately one is conscious the whole time of a provincialism which really does not quite fit with Nietzsche.

On Saturday the Nietzsche Congress opened with Oswald Spengler's lecture on *Neitzsche and the 20th Century*. The hall was overcrowded and I had to have a chair carried in for me.

Spengler's lecture was a disaster. It was the first time I had seen him; he stood there, a fat prelate with a flabby chin and a brutal mouth, holding forth for an hour with the most trite and trivial rubbish. Any young workman from an Evening Study group who had taken the trouble to acquaint himself with Nietzsche's writings could have done it better. Not a single original thought; not even a *false* diamond. Everything was uniformly insipid, unstimulating, boring—yes, Spengler actually managed to make Nietzsche boring. Only one or two perfectly idiotic statements enlivened the evening. English philosophers had never considered the idea of the State "because England is not a State"! I suppose *Leviathan* doesn't exist (probably Spengler has never heard of Hobbes and his successors). The lady sitting next to me had been almost insulted when I said beforehand that Spengler did not interest me—I had only come out of courtesy to Frau Foerster. Now she said that my verdict that it was the performance of an untalented schoolboy was much too kind.

Frau Foerster told me the story of her reconciliation with the Wagner family. Last year, at the Bayreuth festival, the Wagners had called on her. She then gave a lunch for them at which the reconciliation was officially sealed. They all held hands round the table, and she read them one of her brother's poems. Siegfried Wagner formally asked her to share the family box at the Bayreuth theatre. She was unable to be cross with him because she could still see in him the little boy who had loved her "more than anything else in the world." So does the world-shaking quarrel of Wagner and Nietzsche fade out, quite in keeping with the style of epigones.

The "Court" atmosphere, so typical of Bayreuth, was not missing; the Princess of Albania witnessed the whole scene and was deeply moved. The whole thing is unbelievably *spiessig* and thousands of miles in feeling from the conception of *Götterdämmerung* (and even more that of *Zarathustra*). But who knows? Might not Richard Wagner have offered reconciliation to Nietzsche over a nice cup of coffee? ... But not, I think, Nietzsche to Wagner.

Weimar, 6 November, 1927

Gordon Craig in splendid form at supper—he spoke very sharply against Piscator and other novelty-makers in the theatre. Novelties in the theatre, he says, are bad in principle and the public is quite right to condemn them....

Berlin, 14 November, 1927

After failing to appear on two occasions, Kurt Weill came to talk about my ballet.

Dolbin

Kurt Weill

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He said he would like to write the music for it but he had just been commissioned by his publisher to write a big opera and already had an advance for it; so he must ask the publisher if he can take leave, so to speak, for the ballet for two or three months. He feels the music should mostly be sung from the wings and wants to use only a small number of instruments —flutes, saxophones. I talked to him about the Sardana and its extraordinary instrumentation and played him some recordings. He listened attentively and thought the music, which he had never heard before, intriguing.

23 November, 1927

LONG CONVERSATION with Frau Deutsch about Walther Rathenau.[1] Of his mother, she said she was a hard cruel woman. There were constant scenes between her and her husband and with her son as well. His parents had not allowed him to have any literary interests; he could not even read Shakespeare; once when they caught him reading a play at night he was punished. Rathenau had to get all his intellectuality for himself. He worked constantly at his own development: his democracy, his patriotism, and his republicanism were all false: it was always himself he was concerned with. All the same his roots were deep in German culture and he just couldn't detach himself from Germany; that part of him was real.

Rathenau (according to Frau Deutsch) had a presentiment of his death. Just after he became Foreign Minister he told her that Chancellor Wirth had come to him with his teeth chattering—and repeated what a Catholic priest had told Wirth. After struggling with his conscience (because of the secrecy of the confessional) the priest had decided he must repeat what he had heard in the confessional: that the next name "on the murder list" was to be Rathenau. The priest, after telling Wirth this, went to Cardinal Pacelli to get absolution for breaking absolute confessional secrecy. Rathenau had told her all this quite calmly, and asked her what he ought to do. She had said, "Nothing." So that in a way she was partly guilty of his death. Afterwards she had changed her mind and advised him to get some protection; and he did so for a time. But then the police upset him: he couldn't bear to have people around him all the time watching his every step....

[1] Kessler was collecting material for his planned biography of Walther Rathenau (published in June, 1928).

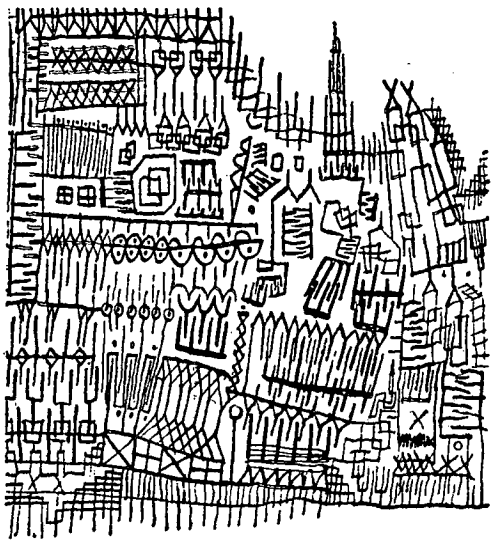
Afterwards I saw Rathenau's sister, Edith Andreae. In contrast to Lili Deutsch she described her mother as cultivated, sentimental, romantic, extremely musical, and as a young woman strikingly beautiful. Edith Andreae was convinced that her brother had been a complete romantic. His passion for the blond German race was pure romanticism. She had teased him about it, saying if he had known Arminius or Siegfried he would have run away from them—they would have been too unwashed for him.... And his love for *Deutschland* had been romance; the War had destroyed it for "his beloved" had died. Lili Deutsch had told me this too, that Rathenau had been totally broken by the War. And the War had made him suffer from his Jewishness again: when he had been a youngster he couldn't get a commission in the Army; and then, later, when he longed to help his "beloved Germany," his *Judentum* was still a millstone around his neck.

Weimar, 11 December, 1927

PAUL HINDEMITH'S *Cardillac*. A good production, and the music of a high standard and well-constructed. Next to Alban Berg's *Wozzeck*, the most powerful modern German opera I know.

Berlin, 19 January, 1928

I CAME OVER from Weimar to an evening reception at Pierre Viénot's to meet André Gide (and among others, Liszt's grand-daughter). Gide was, or appeared to be, delighted at our meeting. He read from his *Enfant Prodigue* but broke



Paul Klee

DECAY (1927)

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off suddenly, exclaiming: "*Non, c'est trop belge, c'est trop mauvais. On ne peut plus lire cela. J'ai fait mieux depuis.*"

Leipzig, 18 February, 1928

CAME HERE for the première of Kurt Weill's short opera *Der Zar lässt sich photographieren*. Weill's music has pace but is as dry as *matzos*.

Vienna, 13 June, 1928

HOFMANNSTHAL dined with me in the Bristol, and we went afterwards to the Schubert Festival Concert in the Josefsplatz. The grandiose baroque palaces on all sides were brilliantly lighted from within and one looked through the open windows into the stately salons, the square itself being in darkness, and above it the vault of a clear, almost Italian night sky. The square was partly filled with people moving about, listening to the music. The whole thing made a purely Italian impression and yet I know no town in Italy where the whole affair could be staged before such a sumptuously Imperial baroque backdrop. Hofmannsthal said himself that he had never experienced anything in Vienna like it.

Next day, lunched with the Hofmannsthals in Rodaun, with Richard Strauss (and his daughter-in-law). The conversation never really got going because everybody wanted to talk of different things. Strauss expressed his idiotic political opinions—the need for a dictatorship, etc., which nobody took seriously. In the evening I saw the second performance of their new opera, *Ägyptische Helena*, and was disappointed and bored. Libretto and music equally weak and written-out. I am glad I shall not have to discuss it with Hofmannsthal and Strauss.

Berlin, 24 June, 1928

MY BOOK ON Rathenau appeared today. All the major national newspapers devote whole columns, and there is a leading article in the *Berliner Tageblatt*. This afternoon, at the inauguration ceremony of the Walther Rathenau Society, [Professor Arnold] Brecht produced a copy of the book and read excerpts from it.

Trier-Verdun-Rheims, 24 August, 1928

DROVE THROUGH Luxemburg to Verdun, and then through the Champagne to Rheims. The burned-out villages on the hills near Verdun are the prologue to a truly shattering landscape. A landscape that fills one with horror: mile after mile of military cemeteries; trees burned to charcoal still stretching their limbs to the sky; ruined farms and, in the distance, the bare white and grey shimmer of the chalk downs. Horror and anguish tear one alternately. The thickly packed little white crosses in the graveyards, thousands upon thousands, seem in the broad landscape almost unimportant. The souls of the dead crying for revenge on those who are guilty of this crime: an eternal cry for peace.

And then, the final blow, Rheims. The wounded, dreadfully misused Cathedral, scoured by fire, its stones as eaten away as if they had lain for thousands of years in the depths of the sea: infinitely grand, terrifyingly expressive, of an unearthly ruined beauty.... This whole tragic land from Verdun to Rheims should be made a place of pilgrimage, a sacred centre of homage to the wounded Church in condemnation of war and as a prayer for peace. But the only processions of pilgrims here are tourists, especially Americans with their Kodak cameras and their crowded schedules of sight-seeing to Valmy and the Marne. We ought to come here now as the Greeks once went to the awesome mythical figures of their tragedies: to be purged with pity and terror.

Berlin, 27 September, 1928

SAW THE *Dreigroschenoper*, Brecht and Kurt Weill. A gripping performance, Piscator-like, primitive, proletarian. Weill's music is engaging and expressive, the players excellent. It is the

SUBURBS *George Grosz*

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fashionable play of the moment, always sold out—one must have seen it.

London, 4/5 October, 1928

THE FRENCH AMBASSADOR Fleuriau opened the Maillol exhibition in the Goupil Gallery in Regent Street with a short speech. Was introduced to him and in our few minutes of conversation gathered that he had heard of Maillol today for the first time. Lord Howard de Walden whom I also met had had cards printed for today's luncheon "to meet Mr. Aristide Maillol." The exhibition is well-designed and makes a masterly impression. The Rothensteins want to give Maillol a luncheon too.

HEARD THE STORY of Emil Ludwig's reception by our Ambassador here. Ludwig sent in his name simply as "Herr Ludwig," and the Ambassador saw him at once, but without knowing who he was.

"Please be seated, Herr Ludwig.... You are German?"

Ludwig, who took this to be a hint as to his Jewish appearance, replied "Yes, indeed. I've just written a biography of Bismarck."

The Ambassador, suddenly realising what had happened, threw up his hands and cried, "Oh God!"

Ludwig took that to be a contemptuous reference to his book and quickly took his leave.

The Ambassador, terribly embarrassed and furious at his own tactlessness, still could not bring himself to invite Ludwig again. Whereupon Ludwig took off, out of London, in a tremendous pique. Lord Tyrrell afterwards tried to comfort the Ambassador with an anecdote about Emil Ludwig. Ludwig had complained that great men are simply no longer respected in Germany. "When Moltke and Bismarck walked down Unter den Linden, all the passers-by raised their hats. But do you suppose anybody takes off his hat when I walk down the Linden with Feuchtwanger?"

Paris, 9 October, 1928

SAW Giraudoux's *Siegfried* with Louis Jouvet at the Comédie des Champs Elysées. The Germans and French are typed like carbon copies and are therefore boring and get on one's nerves. One realises above all how falsely even a well-meaning Frenchman sees only the superficialities of German life. The costumes of the German characters, meant to be contemporary, are ridiculous, like pantomime figures of the 1860s. Ludendorff and Walther Rathenau are called both together to an audience by Siegfried—in 1921! The production and acting were wretched, and absurdly out of date. When one comes from London or Berlin and goes to the theatre in Paris, one finds oneself suddenly on a different, much lower level; it's the "province," where the fashions and fads of thirty years ago are still reckoned the latest thing.

Paris, 14 October, 1928

WENT OUT TO Marly to see Maillol, who was on his feet again but seems to have been really seriously ill. Rodin's work stands no comparison with Maillol's—his "*Thinker*" stands next to Maillol's bronzes (from the park at Versailles) at the casting works for repair, and it looks like nothing at all. It's all small details, a perfect muscle here and there, but as a *passé* conception it disappears beside Maillol's work. Maillol agreed that, unlike Rodin, he had detached himself from the 19th century and gone back to the 18th. Later he remarked: "*C'est plus difficile à placer une statue, qu'à la faire.*"

Berlin, 25 October, 1928

LARGE DINNER, white tie, the company included Heinrich Mann, Jakob Wassermann, Ernst Rowohlt. I don't seem to get anywhere with Mann; he leaves on me the impression of a codfish. But his wife, on the other hand, is delicious—I hear she was once a servant girl or a cook—like a voluptuous Renoir or a Goya....

Berlin, 27 October, 1928

MAX REINHARDT'S *Romeo and Juliet* in the Berliner Theatre. An unbelievable muddle! Out of so much intelligence and brightness, so bad and provincial a result. The sets copy Palladio (Vicenza), with Juliet's bedroom in the courtyard between screens, and the balcony scene played backstage so that one couldn't hear Romeo at all (and Juliet only just). During the Nurse's scene with Juliet, the audience began to laugh loudly; with the result that Elisabeth Bergner and her Nurse, highly confused and upset, rushed off from between the screens, and an endless pause followed in the darkened house, presumably while, offstage, some assistant director or other tried to calm Bergner down. The public, apart from an obviously hired claque, was icy, and at the end the regular theatregoers in the better seats left silently without applauding. Elisabeth Bergner and the very Byronic young Franz Lederer make a beautiful pair of lovers, but otherwise the production offers nothing.

(A concluding instalment will be published next month.)

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Henry Fairlie

The Lives of Politicians

Ordinary and Extraordinary

IN HIS COLLECTION of essays, *The Charm of Politics*, R. H. S. Crossman recounts the advice which was given to him as a young man by the then Warden of New College, H. A. L. Fisher: "I stayed in Oxford too long, and I went into politics at the top. That was the cause of my failure. Go in while you are young. Whether you succeed or fail does not matter. It is the life that matters...." One may doubt whether a man of Fisher's temper could ever have succeeded in politics—as it was, he was an improbable soldier in Lloyd George's band of adventurers—but the last two sentences of his advice summarise one of the traditional attitudes to politics in Britain. In spite of all the changes which have taken place in the past hundred years, politics in this country is still often presented as a humane pursuit, fit to engage the whole life of a whole man, the supreme art of a highly civilised and polite society. It is the life that matters.

Looking at the House of Commons today—outwardly so commonplace—it seems either romantic or sentimental to talk of politics in these terms. The House, certainly, does not have the importance it had in the eighteenth century, when it both confirmed and gave local standing, and the nobility and the gentry took naturally to politics in the search for gain, glory, and position. Nor does it have the same importance as it did up to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. In his illuminating volume of memoirs, Willoughby de Broke listed in order of preference those personages and classes who, at the time of the 1867 Reform Act, composed The County:

The Lord Lieutenant,
The Master of Foxhounds,
The Agricultural Landlords,
The Bishop,
The Chairman of Quarter Sessions,
The Colonel of Yeomanry,
The Member of Parliament,
The Dean,
The Archdeacon,
The Justices of Peace,
The lesser Clergy,
The larger Farmers.

"This rough table of precedence," commented Willoughby de Broke, "includes all such folk as were asked by Mr. Thorne of Ullathorne to Ullathorne sports, faithfully presented in *Barchester Towers* as only Anthony Trollope knew how to present them."

THE COUNTY AND THE WORLD of Trollope have passed, although sometimes during the premiership of Harold Macmillan there may have seemed reason to doubt it, and with them have passed the member of Parliament's standing in an established order of precedence. Yet something of the spirit of politics created in those days persists, and seems likely to persist even longer. The career of politics—or, rather, the life of politics—is still held in an esteem which has little to do with the real power it offers, or even with the success or failure which may accompany it. The point has, in fact, been made recently by a political scientist who is by no means tender to traditional attitudes:

> British politics has long depended on the existence of an independent leisured class, willing and able to devote the greater part of their days, or at least of their ample spare time, to the business of government. It has benefited by the high

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esteem in which the political career has always been held and the eagerness with which men have always sought to enter it. And through the years this has changed only slowly, even at the national level, where men have for some time been paid for the political functions which they perform. . . .[1]

"It is something to have sat in the House of Commons though it has been but for one session," wrote Trollope:

To die and not to have done so is to die and not to have done that which it most becomes an Englishman to have achieved.

England does not choose her six hundred and fifty-four best men. . . . But, although England does not send thither none but her best men, the best of her Commoners do find their way there. It is the highest and most legitimate pride of an Englishman to have the letters of M.P. written after his name. No selection from the alphabet, no doctorship, no fellowship, be it of ever so learned or royal a society, no knightship—not though it be of the Garter—confers so fair an honour. (*Can You Forgive Her?*, Vol. II.)

This, even allowing for the irony, is putting it a little high for these days, but it is still worth noticing that the honour which Trollope described did not lie in the possession of power or the attainment of office; it lay solely in the fact and activity of being a member of Parliament. Later, in the same novel, Palliser, by then Chancellor of the Exchequer, addresses Grey, who has just been elected a member:

"I hope you will like it," he said to Grey.

"I shall never like it as you do," Grey answered.

"And why not;—why not?"

"In the first place, I have not begun it so young."

"Any time before thirty-five is young enough."

"For useful work, yes,—but hardly for enjoyment in the thing. And then I don't believe it all as you do. To you the British House of Commons is everything."

"Yes,—everything," said Mr. Palliser with unwonted enthusiasm;—"everything, everything. That and the Constitution are everything."

"It is not so to me."

"Ah, but it will be. . . . You'll get to feel as I do."

Even an Independent member, A. P. Herbert, who was uninterested in power and office, could write of the House when he left it:

Whatever jokes may be made about it, the House of Commons is a formidable body, drawn from every class and corner. They may not all be philosophers or senior wranglers, which is just as well: but you could hardly mention any subject, they say, without some Member shyly coming forward and confessing that he knows all about it, whether it is the Battle of Waterloo, the keeping of hens, the geography of Malaya, or the running of a coal-mine.[2]

SENTIMENTS such as these—"that which it most becomes an Englishman to have achieved"; "the British House of Commons is everything"; "it is the life that matters"; "the charm of politics"—crowd the pages of political memoirs even today. It is not all self-delusion; and it is the survival of these sentiments in an age and a political system which certainly could not have produced them—in conditions which no longer justify them—that still gives British politics their peculiar flavour. It is still, to an important degree, the life—not the power, not the office, not the gain—that matters.

It is, of course, easy to deride this traditional view of the House of Commons. The delusions it encourages are certainly dangerous, and will have to be discussed later. But, when all has been said, one is still left with the words and example of a man like L. S. Amery, whose intellect and ability could have ensured him a successful and rewarding career in almost any field, but who chose instead to fight, and to fight long and strenuously, in the political arena. In the introduction to his four Chichele lectures, he reflected (*Thoughts on the Constitution*, 1947):

It is, indeed, as a never-ending adventure that political life most appears in retrospect, a great game with its "Routs and discomfitures, rushes and rallies," its "Fights for the fearless and goals for the eager." A game in thinking back over which one may often be inclined to wonder "had I done this, had I left that undone," sometimes tempted to feel that the struggle has been unavailing and to overlook the flooding-in of unhoped-for results. On the whole, one remains content to believe that the game itself was good, and that one played one's best for one's chosen goals, and by one's own rules.

Some may believe that Amery would have served his country, and himself, better if he had remained in academic life, or become a great public servant. If so, they forget the moment in 1940 when he confronted Neville Chamberlain at the crisis of the war, and cried to him, with the words of Cromwell: "Depart, I say, and let us have done with you. In the name of God, go!" It is for such moments, critical in the life of a nation, that the endless adventure (as F. S. Oliver called it) is lived, and Britain has

[1] W. L. Guttsman, *The British Political Elite* (1964).

[2] A. P. Herbert, *Independent Member* (1960), p. 48.

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normally, in moments of crisis, found men, equipped and ready, in the body of the House of Commons.

The Critics of Politicians

TODAY, more than ever, the politician appears to be held in contempt. Everywhere one hears echoes of Belloc's grisly epitaph:

> *Here, richly with ridiculous display,*
> *The politician's corpse is laid away.*
> *While all of his acquaintance sneered and slanged,*
> *I wept, for I had longed to see him hanged.*

Belloc, of course, found his own experience of politics—of "the Grocers and Pawnbrokers who control the caucus in Salford," and of Parliament, whose members he described as "the dirtiest company it has ever been my misfortune to keep"—bitterly disillusioning; and, if one had known the Liberal Party in his day, one might well have agreed with him.

But there are many, without Belloc's experiences, who are just as contemptuous. Their attitude is, of course, not new. It was not this year, nor last year, but more than twenty years ago that Emanuel Shinwell (in his *The Britain I Want*, 1943) protested against "music-hall, cabaret and sometimes broadcasting jokes about the motives and usefulness of M.P.s." The politician has nearly always been treated, especially by the literary world, with some contempt: so much so that, if we happen to admire a politician, we feel obliged to deny that he is a politician at all and call him a statesman. The distinction is largely a false one. "A statesman is a dead politician," it is said, and there is no alternative to his being a politician while he is alive, except (as D. W. Brogan has pointed out) being a courier, a demagogue or a conspirator. Those who still nourish "the old literary prejudice against the politician" need to be reminded of this. There are no other choices available. In hindsight, a politician may be credited with having been a statesman; it may seem that his qualities were indispensable at the time, and that no one else could have supplied them. But, whatever he did to earn posthumously the title of statesman, he did during his lifetime as a politician: by virtue of his skill in manoeuvre, management, and persuasion.

TO RECOGNISE THIS should, in fact, save the observer, not only from too great a contempt for the politician, but also from too great a fascination with him, the kind of fascination which John Fitzgerald Kennedy had for some American intellectuals, who should have known better. It should be possible neither to contemn the politician too much nor to praise him for what he is not and certainly should not be. "If people want a sense of purpose," Harold Macmillan once said, "they should get it from their archbishops. They should not hope to receive it from their politicians."[3] This delimiting of the field of politics is civilised—indeed it is one of the foundations of a free society—and to recognise the correct boundaries should prevent both exaggerated disdain for, and exaggerated bemusement with, the largely mundane works of the politician.

Nevertheless, although contempt for the politician is not new, there is one reason why it deserves more attention than in the past. When, in the middle of the nineteenth century, the political system was ceasing to function effectively, Gladstone argued that it should be revived by a touch of the popular power: this touch (rather more than a touch) was given in 1867 and it did, indeed, cause a decisive and invigorating change. But no such magic can be worked today. We already enjoy universal adult suffrage. There is no way of extending it—for example, by giving votes to minors—which would make any sensible difference to the working of the political system. There is no element outside the pale of the constitution which can be brought in to give it new life. The democracy of Britain is, quite literally, at the end of its tether.

For this reason, every criticism of the political process and those who work it must be given more consideration than it might otherwise deserve. There are already signs that the bane of all democracies, a growing discontent of the governed with their governors, is at work in this country, that a gulf could open between "we" and "they." This is a danger which no one who cherishes free institutions can afford to

[3] In an interview with the author (1963). The opposite (characteristically American) view was put by John W. Gardner, Lyndon Johnson's excellent Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare. The nation's leaders, he said, must serve as "symbols of the moral unity of society.... They can conceive and articulate goals that lift people out of their petty preoccupations, carry them above the conflicts that tear a society apart, and unite them in the pursuit of objectives worthy of their best efforts...." (*Washington Post*, 14 December 1965).

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dismiss lightly.[4] A people which holds its freely elected governors in contempt has taken the first step towards rejecting free institutions. It is one thing to criticise the activities of individual members of Parliament; it is quite another to criticise the activity of being a member of Parliament. It is one thing to look at Parliament with a cool, comprehending and sometimes cynical eye; it is quite another to belittle Parliament. Politicians practise the daily business (which is not always savoury) of making the free government which we enjoy possible; the first duty of those who are not politicians is to understand what they are doing.

MUCH OF CONTEMPORARY, as of past criticism of politicians derives from a literary or aesthetic prejudice against the necessary compromises of political life. These literary critics of politics lament, as Goldsmith did of Burke:

> *Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such*
> *We scarcely can praise it, or blame it, too much;*
> *Who, born for the Universe, narrow'd his mind,*
> *And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.*

The attitude is to be found among journalists and writers, but also among men who either failed in the Commons or were not happy in it. "You know the nature of that assembly," Bolingbroke wrote, "they grow, like hounds, fond of the man who shows them game, and by whose loud halloo they are encouraged." But Bolingbroke, when he wrote his letter to Windham, was a bitter, defeated and attainted man. Much the same, as has been observed, was true of Belloc, whose spirit was never made to meet the day-to-day accidents and disappointments of political life. In our own day, Christopher Hollis has declared that "it would really be simpler and more economical to keep a flock of tame sheep and from time to time drive them through the division lobbies in the appropriate numbers."[5]

But Hollis, whatever his other and rich qualities, was never an effective member of the House while he was there. He used to ride his hobby horses—well-bred and intelligent mounts, but over-sensitive—each neighing more loudly than the last, into debate, and both the chamber and the press gallery, which is no bad judge of irrelevance, emptied.

Hollis wishes, as did Belloc, that the House of Commons should be primarily a debating society. As members, both of them made the mistake of imagining that what was good enough for the Oxford Union would necessarily be good enough for Parliament. But politics are primarily concerned with getting things done. Speech and debate are merely the instruments of action. The mark of the politician, as opposed to those who merely write about politics, is that (for a variety of motives) he actually wants to do things. This is true of the back-bench member as well as the minister. "It was better, I thought," A. P. Herbert said of his experience in the House,

> for those of us who have neither the powers of supermen nor the position of dictators to try to get a few small things done than to vapour vainly about the woes of the world.

He cannot always do what he would like to do, and the methods which he must use are not always ideal. But, in spite of these limitations, he never loses sight of the fact that he is in Parliament to do things, and not merely to make speeches about them. An idea may be worth stating and an attitude may be worth proclaiming, but, inside the House of Commons, these must pass a further test. They must be seen to form part of a coherent body of opinion somewhere in the House, whose weight, whether of numbers or of influence, is likely to affect actual decisions. It is this which the critics (especially the literary critics) of politicians usually ignore, and it is for this reason that they are so often wrong in estimating the qualities which both the ordinary and the extraordinary politician bring to the day-to-day drudgery of governing a free nation.

AS POWERFUL TODAY, though not as widespread, as the literary criticism is the managerial criticism of politics. Businessmen and managers find the processes of free institutions baffling. Like Reith, they ponder the deadly question, whether it is

> undesirable to have elected representatives associated with the management of public services?

[4] The conditions of democracy have existed in this country for less than a century, since the passing of the Reform Act of 1867; some, like Aneurin Bevan, argue that they have existed only since 1928, when universal adult suffrage was at last achieved. Whichever date we choose, the time has been short, and it is by no means certain that a democracy based on universal adult suffrage can maintain free institutions. But the experiment is well worth making: it is the only one available.

[5] Christopher Hollis, *Can Parliament Survive?* (1954), p. 64.

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> Log-rolling; ears to the ground, fear of the electors; everything submitted to the criterion of the vote. Timidity, compromise, mediocrity—[are] these the inevitable concomitants of democracy?[6]

This is the voice of the manager, proclaiming, as does every opponent of free institutions, that himself freed from the necessity to consult ordinary people he could run their lives for them far more efficiently and beneficently than they can themselves. The words which Reith uses, apparently pejorative, need examination. Politicians may occasionally be unnecessarily timid, but the timidity which Reith condemns as an inevitable concomitant of democracy is something else: it is the politician's recognition that, in a free state where he cannot command, there are slower but surer ways of doing things than by vainglorious declarations of policy or principle. Politicians may sometimes compromise too readily, but the willingness to compromise is as desirable as it is essential to the working of free institutions: it is the politician's acknowledgment that he must be ready to accommodate other wills and other desires than his own. Politicians, as often as not, may be mediocre men, but the presence of this mediocrity is in itself a virtue of free government: it is the admission that government is, or should be, exercised in the interests of largely ordinary and mediocre people, and that, in reaching decisions, the hopes and fears, as well as the shrewd native judgment, of ordinary and mediocre men and women are needed.

Reith, revealingly, justifies the "brute force of monopoly" which he employed in order to establish the kind of broadcasting service which he thought best for the British people, in these words:

> But without monopoly many things might not have been done so easily that were done.... Almost everything might have been different. The BBC might have had to play for safety; prosecute the obviously popular lines; count its clients; study and meet their reaction; curry favour; subordinate itself to the vote. Might have had to; it probably would not; but its road would have been far harder.

This is precisely the point. The politician's is not the easiest way of doing things. His road is far harder than the manager's, and he always seems to be travelling to Birmingham by way of Beachy Head. But it is harder because he cannot in a free state act like the head of a corporation; he cannot assume, as Reith did at the BBC, either that he knew "the British mentality at its best," or that he can determine better than people themselves what is good for them. He must, to use Reith's odious phrase, "subordinate himself to the vote," and nothing except an authoritarian or paternalist system of government can free him from this necessity or absolve him from this responsibility.

LASTLY, THERE IS a prejudice against politicians which runs far wider and deeper through society than either the literary or the managerial criticism. The dislike of most people for politicians, J. D. B. Miller said in his inaugural lecture as Professor of Politics in the University of Leicester (*Politicians*, 1958),

> is the rage of Caliban at seeing his own face in the glass. The worst and best thing about politicians is that they are representative of the people who elect them. Taken as a body, the House of Commons possesses most of the virtues and shortcomings of the community it is said to represent. It may not do so in exact mathematical proportions, but it is sufficiently representative to be a disappointment; it is so plainly like ourselves.

In fact, there is some advantage in seeing the face of Caliban when we look at a politician: it at least prevents us from being too easily deluded by him. It is certainly better, as I have suggested elsewhere, than being spirited away by Ariel, to gaze on politics as Ferdinand mooned over Miranda. Nevertheless, as Miller concluded, politicians, "as a class, do not deserve the obloquy they receive. And, as a class, they perform functions which we cannot do without." "The worst that can be said about Members," wrote Jennings, "is that they are ordinary people, with a fair slice of ambition."[7] It is also the best. The enduring virtue of the House of Commons throughout the centuries is that it has been composed largely of ordinary people of ordinary talents. That they are ordinary people, that they will react by and large as ordinary people, not only at moments of crisis but especially at moments of crisis, is their value, their virtue and, although they are seldom given it, their glory. Take away their ordinariness, and they will no longer be our defence against the extraordinary people who are always wanting to do extraordinary things to us. If representative institutions cannot survive without the heightened ambition of a few extraordinary

[6] J. C. W. Reith, *Into the Wind* (1949), p. 170.
[7] W. Ivor Jennings, *Parliament* (1957), p. 497.

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members, equally they cannot survive without the ordinariness of the great majority of them.

The Tasks of the Politician

THE ART OF FREE GOVERNMENT, which both the ordinary and the extraordinary politician practise, does not consist in the pursuit of political theories, however articulate they may be. The pattern which a politician must follow "is not laid up in heaven and the less he thinks of his footsteps as resembling those of an audible divine purpose the better. His duty is not to meet the specifications laid down by Plato or Hegel; but the endless, varied and unpredictable demands of situations created by varied human wills."[8] In a similar passage, C. H. Wilson has sought to dispel what he calls the Utopian illusion about politics, the illusion that politics are concerned only with principles and moral categories. "The first object of a political education," he has written,

> is to dispel in the citizen's mind the manifold Utopian notions of man's nature and of the nature of the world with which most persons emerge from the arduous experience of adolescence. He has to learn that men are moved not only by principle but by interest, that their actions are aimed not only at the discharge of duty but also at the satisfaction of passion, appetite and unreflecting habit. He has to learn that the world in which he acts is a world of scarcity and that all the resources at his disposal are limited, both material resources of wealth and immaterial ones of time and political support. He must learn that all these resources have alternative uses between which he must choose, and that generally his choice is irrevocable.

Only one rider need be added. Principle, honour, loyalty, and a sense of duty do matter. It is only if he is equipped with them, in not negligible proportions, that a politician can hope to negotiate all the shoals of politics, all the interests, pressures and passions with which politics embarrass him, and emerge with at least some credit to himself and some advantage to his country.

Politicians, then, begin with recalcitrant material: resources which are limited; human wills which are unpredictable and human emotions which are more so; interests which conflict, but all of which have to be heeded; and support, both at Westminster and in the country, which at any time may wither away. The politician in a free state cannot command. He cannot increase his resources by slave labour or by aggrandisement abroad; he cannot remove obstinate human wills; he cannot destroy interests which he finds inconvenient; his support is based neither on an army nor on a secret police. None of the methods of dictatorship is available to him, and without these methods he cannot change the material with which he must work. He is a potter who cannot choose his own clay, a painter who cannot mix his own paints, a composer who must score for a brass band what he had perhaps intended for a string quartet. That is the measure of his art.

THE FIRST TASK OF A POLITICIAN, therefore, is to try to reconcile the multiplicity of conflicting interests and wills which exist in any free society, and to produce from their conflict a policy which if not approved will, at least for the time being, be acquiesced in by all of them. He does this by the only way possible: by rule of thumb. The only expertise in his art is that which he gathers from experience of his colleagues, his party, and Parliament. It is largely a matter of judging occasions: when to stand firm, when to give way; when frankness will bring rewards, when a little bit of hypocrisy will save a lot of trouble; when to sit back and wait, when to act decisively; when to provoke opposition, when to mollify it. He learns to judge, by instinct, the characters and moods of those with whom he must deal, the strength of the groups and interests which beset him, the motives behind any action; and, judging, he proceeds to manoeuvre, to manage, and to persuade.

None of this may seem to be very different from what is demanded of any man in any position of responsibility. But, in fact, the differences are large, and they are not just differences of degree. In politics, there is no ascertainable object which is accepted as overriding, except in time of war: only a multiplicity of aims, all of which have constantly to be taken into account. In politics, there is no clear hierarchy of command: only a shifting balance of power, which may leave the strong minister of yesterday almost isolated tomorrow. In politics, there is no security of tenure at the top: indeed, since there is no gratitude in politics, success can bring eviction from office as surely as failure. In politics, nothing can *for certain* be done away from the glare of publicity: for, in a country where even the secrets of cabinets are not safe, every decision is liable to public scrutiny. This

[8] D. W. Brogan, *The Free State* (1945), p. 48.

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is why success in any other activity does not of itself ensure success in politics. The successful man of business, even the trade union leader, is unused to the perils of open discussion and public debate; he finds them restricting and finds it difficult to understand their purpose; in the end, he usually abandons them in bewilderment, if not in disgust. The politician must be of different mettle.

THE SECOND TASK OF THE POLITICIAN is to maintain public interest in political issues, for without such interest free government is meaningless. It is also impossible. "I have often marvelled," A. P. Herbert has written, "at the free, fiery and selfless toil which people will devote to pushing someone else into Parliament." Wonder one well may, for, in spite of all the jokes that may be made about the active constituency worker, in spite of the legitimate criticisms of the part which they play, or appear to play, in policy-making, it is precisely on their "free, fiery and selfless toil" that the working of a representative system depends. To encourage and sustain the interest of the active constituency worker is a valuable part of the politician's work and, again, its performance demands peculiar qualities. Whatever the rights and wrongs in Nigel Nicolson's dispute with his constituency association after the Suez operation, the one indisputable fact is that he had lost the confidence of more than half of its active members and thus rendered it less effective as a fighting organisation than it might have been. No politician who fails (even when he is acting independently) to retain the support and sustain the enthusiasm of his association can claim to be a good politician. The successful working of this relationship, in which both association and member have rights, depends primarily on the member, and no member who lacks the tact, the wit and the force of character to preserve this successful working is entitled to be in politics, or to complain if he is bundled out of them by his own supporters.

It is not the interest of the active constituency worker only which the politician must sustain. He must also provoke the interest of the inactive, of those who are by nature or circumstance disposed to be uninterested. At its least positive, he performs this task merely by being seen. There is, to adapt Bagehot's phrase, a dignified as well as an efficient side to the politician. He attends meetings of local bodies, joins in local activities, lunches with the local Rotary, and looks in on the local Women's Institutes; he champions the local football team, takes an interest in the local hospital, attends ceremonies at local churches, will spare an evening for a local boys' club. The local prestige of the sitting member may have declined since the last century, but it has not vanished. At functions, small and large, his presence—however unlikely it may seem—is taken to confer something of a dignity.

This simple evidence of his availability is of extreme importance when the central government tends to seem remote and unapproachable. To the men and bodies of influence in his constituency, the member is known and easily available. But it does not stop there. Perhaps a large proportion of electors do not know the name of their member; but that is only part, and not the most important part, of the truth. The fact is, as any member's post-bag confirms, that, whenever they come up against the folly or tyranny of lesser or greater officials, ordinary people are still apt to turn to their sitting member, acting in the confident belief that he will be readily available to them. "I will write to my member of Parliament," implies confidence as well as a boast.

BUT THIS IS STILL only the beginning. Opinion is formed through many channels. It is the duty of the politician to know and use them all. By public meetings, by addresses to specialist and private bodies, by confidential meetings, by letters to the local or national press, by personal contacts, he helps to excite the general and continuing interest in public issues which he has already done something to arouse by the part he has played in the proceedings of the House of Commons. There must be moments when he wonders what effect all this ceaseless activity has had, whether the cynicism of the critics is not justified, whether there is anything he can specifically attribute to his words and deeds. But the influence is a continuing one. When the time to vote comes, the British people will give as matured and informed a verdict as may reasonably be expected from a mass electorate, and much of the credit is the politician's.

THE THIRD TASK of the politician is to act as a catalyst on public opinion. Eventually, and especially at moments of crisis, he may, as Bagehot demanded of him, "express the mind of the English people," but the mind is rarely

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clear enough to be expressed at all. Instead, there are countless currents of opinion, some strong, some only vaguely held; some sluggish, others lively; some dull but lasting, others bright but evanescent. With all of these, the politician must concern himself. He learns to judge their importance and their timeliness; he learns to shape them so that he may gain public attention; above all, he learns how to relate them to some established body of opinion, some general attitude, so that they no longer appear only the opinions and attitudes of isolated minorities. In all of this, he is helped by the day-to-day sifting of issues, of the trivial from the apparently trivial, the serious from the apparently serious, which goes on in the House of Commons; but he could not do it without the special quality of mind which the politician brings to his task.

The politician, if he is to be successful in this, must be less interested in forwarding his own opinions and attitudes than in the relationship between different opinions and attitudes. If, as J. D. B. Miller has said, he is an adjuster of interests, he is also an adjuster of ideas, finding their point of contact with each other, mixing and re-mixing them, until he precipitates some general idea of general application. This demands of him more self-effacement than most men of ideas would find easy or tolerable. He cannot forever be proclaiming what he believes to be right and resigning if it is not accepted. It implies no dishonesty or hypocrisy, only the need of the politician to search for the point of contact between different and sometimes opposing ideas, the common ground which alone can make concerted action possible.

IN OUR OWN DAY, there has been no more characteristic example of this self-effacement than Harold Wilson. Even before he became Prime Minister, it was hard to tell what he stood for, or what he believed in; even the publication of his speeches and writings, *Purpose in Politics* (1964), did not take one very far towards understanding what he wanted to do, or why. It is too easy to say that his performance as Prime Minister has supplied the answer: that he does not believe in anything, except remaining in power. It is not lack of belief or principle which is most remarkable in him, but intellectual self-effacement, and it is precisely this quality, in a man intellectually capable and curious, which has made him recognised as the complete politician, which enabled him as soon as he became the leader of his party, to control it with an ease which would have eluded someone of more distinct personal opinions and, as soon as he became Prime Minister, to move without commitment or embarrassment from position to position. The self-effacement has, in Wilson, taken an extreme form: at times, he seems almost to have emptied himself. But, for the student of politics, he will for a long time remain a model of the complete politician, seeking and finding the point of contact between different ideas and attitudes, the common ground which makes government possible.

THE FOURTH TASK of the politician is to be the link between informed and public opinion. The two are very different. What the politician says in public is rarely what he says in the more intimate circles in which he spends so much of his time, in the company of other politicians, civil servants, dons, businessmen, trade unionists, economists and journalists. Sometimes, indeed, it is the very opposite, but there is no need to be too sensitive about this: the contradictions are simply the function of the dual role which he must play. All the time, there is a body of informed opinion which is talking in very different language from the language of the platform or even the television interview. This informed opinion is usually, but not always, far ahead of public opinion in its examination of the problems of government. "Inside opinion," wrote Keynes, "gradually percolates to wider and wider circles, which are susceptible in time to argument, common sense or self-interest."[9] The carrier of informed opinion (and he may be as unconscious of it as the carrier of a disease) is the politician.

This may seem to be saying much the same as Bagehot, when he argued that part of the politician's function is to "teach the nation what it does not know" and "make us hear what otherwise we should not." But both these phrases imply a far more conscious process than it generally is. There may be some politicians who deliberately set out to educate the electorate in some new attitude or policy: Quintin Hogg once said to me (in an interview) that the purpose of his major speeches in the country before the general election of 1959 was "to get people thinking about the things you wanted them to be thinking about...." This consciously educative function, however, is under-

[9] J. M. Keynes', *A Revision of the Treaty* (1922), p. 8.

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taken only by a few politicians, and those generally the leading ones.[10] The process is normally far less deliberate. Informed opinion usually reaches most politicians only when it has already been diluted, already stated in political terms, as part of an argument for adopting one course of action or rejecting another. Indeed, the majority of politicians probably begin to use new concepts and new categories without properly realising what they are doing. They pick up a phrase from their leaders and, without understanding its full implications, repeat it in their constituencies; slowly, by repetition and modification, the phrase and the idea which it represents become part of the common language and common assumptions of their party—and, in time, they hope, part of the political language and assumptions of the whole country.

THE DISADVANTAGE MAY SEEM to be that there is a dangerous lag between informed and public opinion. So, in many cases, there is, but it is one of the unavoidable disadvantages of a free government. The politician must persuade and, although the extraordinary politician may attempt to persuade by shock tactics, as Gladstone did and Lloyd George did, as Cripps did and Gaitskell did, the ordinary politician will stick to the day-to-day business of persuading by reconciliation, of showing how a new policy or idea can be reconciled with the attitudes and myths by which a party lives and with the commonplace aspirations of the electors.

To reconcile the multiplicity of interests and wills which exist in any society; to arouse and sustain public interest in politics; to act as a catalyst on public opinion, eventually producing the common ground which makes action possible; to be the link between informed opinion and public opinion: these are the tasks of the politician. They may seem limited: they are not even as grandly phrased as Bagehot's "expressive," "teaching" and "informing" functions. But they are limited only as to means, not as to ends.[11] They are, in fact, the life of politics in a free government: adjusting, reconciling, fixing, always finding the point of contact between interests, wills and ideas.

IN A PARTY SYSTEM such as we know, they have their exact importance. A governing party, whether it is in office or in opposition, has constantly to adapt itself and its policies, but while it is doing so it must remain a coherent body; it is a coalition of interests and ideas, always seeking to absorb and hold new elements, but it must still be sufficiently aware of itself as a united body to be capable, at any moment, of concerted action. Parties must change but remain the same. The party leaders, close to the problems and demands of government, are most anxious that their party should be capable of change. The party workers in the constituencies, relying for sustenance on their party's ralling cries, are most anxious that it should remain the same.[12] The reconciliation is accomplished by the ordinary politician. "His main effort," it has been said,

> will be in the direction of rationalisation of particular policies, as expressions of either the highest good or the lowest bad. His situation is essentially one in which general notions favourable to his party positions are applied to particular cases. It will also be characterised by ideas about government as such, more detailed and practical than those of the man in the street and on the soapbox, because of the more intimate knowledge which men in parliament have of the working of government; it is their element, in which they move with ease. Nevertheless, these ideas will need to fit in with the general party position which the man supports.[13]

So he effaces and he self-effaces.

Sensitive to public opinion, and to party opinion "at the grassroots," with a strong instinct for his party's survival, carrying most of the burden of political drudgery in the constituencies, and yet possessing some "intimate knowledge of the working of government," the ordi-

[10] A notable example, in recent years, has been the series of speeches which Enoch Powell began to give after his refusal to serve in the Douglas-Home Government, and which he continued to give after the Conservative Party went into opposition, on financial and economic policy. They led, in the modern manner, to the coining of the term, "Powellism." But this proves the point: Powell is, after all, an extraordinary politician.

[11] The "radical" would, of course, deny this. He would say that, by so limiting the means, one is in fact limiting the ends. In a sense, he is right: in the sense that R. H. S. Crossman once admitted that Socialism is impossible except in a one-party state. But the "impossible" is not a useful term of reference.

[12] In spite of all that has been said since Michels and Ostrogorski began the bogey, there are strong arguments for asserting that it is the leadership of parties which are radical, ready for change, and the rank-and-file of parties which are conservative, rejecting its necessity.

[13] J. D. B. Miller, *The Nature of Politics* (1962), pp. 155–6.

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nary politician performs a vital function in politics and one which illustrates, as clearly as any, their purpose.

He should be a specialist in nothing but this.

The Virtue of Ordinariness

ASTONISHINGLY few people are engaged actively in politics. W. L. Guttsman, in 1962, made his own estimate, and reached the figure of between 2,162 and 2,212. He included, in his count, members of Parliament; peers who regularly attend sittings of the House of Lords; officers of the national party organisations and political pressure groups; party agents, local and regional; parliamentary candidates, *seriously* nursing a constituency. There is one obvious omission: the active members of the executive committees of the constituency associations of the main parties. But, even if they were included, the number would still be remarkably small. Guttsman compares his number with the 3,500 whom Bryce estimated were engaged in full-time political activity in 1889, and comments:

> ... it is the more remarkable if we reflect that since Bryce wrote, the population of Britain has increased by 50 per cent, and that during the same time there has taken place a considerable growth of what is alternately described as "bureaucracy," "organisation" or the "apparat" in all spheres of social and economic life.

In fact, the smallness of the number helps to remind us that political activity does not cover the same area as governmental activity.

The one may coincide with the other. Any part of governmental activity may, at any moment, become the subject of political activity. But the two are not the same, and they are never co-terminous. There is no reason why an increase in governmental activity should necessarily involve an equal increase in political activity, and to imagine that it does is one of the faults of many of the present-day criticisms of the political system. When the political life of the country is conducted by between 2,000 and 3,000 people, and when no increase is envisaged by any of the critics which would significantly increase this number, it seems a little ridiculous to imagine that politicians are performing a function which demands from them the attributes of administrators, of civil servants, of professional and scientific advisers and, indeed, as some seem to wish, of experts in time-and-motion study.

The majority of the members of the House of Commons are nothing of the sort, and are not intended or equipped to be anything of the sort. They are, for the most part, unexceptional people, as are the majority of the men and women whom they represent; and, just as in any society it is the unexceptional who are its ballast, so in any representative assembly it is the unexceptional who keep it from lurching from extreme to extreme. The virtue of ballast is that it does not shift in a storm. Bagehot described the country members of his day as "the finest brute votes in Europe," and the ordinary back-bench members today are usually dismissed with the same quip: "lobby-fodder." In a way, it is true. Of course, they do not panic at the first hint of trouble; of course, they will see their party or their leaders through a difficult time with their huzzas and their votes. But no government could survive, let alone govern, without this kind of loyalty and steadfastness.

BUT THEY ARE NOT loyal and steadfast without question. They may be inarticulate, cautious, and slow to move, but it is for these very reasons that, when at last they do make themselves heard, it is apt to be decisive. When a Chief Whip reports to his leader that the usual steady centre is growing restless, that it may not even hold, the leader is bound to take notice. He will be wise to do so, not only because, whether he is leading his party from the right or left of centre, it is on the centre that his power ultimately rests, but also because the back-bench member of no marked political views is the real depository of his party's experience, tradition, and sense of purpose. He has a feeling for what his party can and cannot do; he has an image of his party (rather than any firm grasp of its principles) which guides him, and in turn guides his party, through the shallows of political manoeuvre and debate; he represents the deep, unexpressed, and permanent factors which help to determine the party allegiance—the unchanging party allegiance of millions of ordinary people. A party leader who neglects his attitudes will quickly find himself out of touch, not only with his party, but with the country as well. The ordinary back-bench members, in fact, have their own shrewd judgment of the appropriateness and timeliness of the proposals put before them, an accumulated judgment gathered from numerous different sources.

They also develop their own personal and collective judgment of those who aspire to lead

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them. The House of Commons, as we are perhaps too often told,

> is a tyrant. It has the shifting incalculable moods of a tyrant, and is seldom in the same mood two days running. You may catch it in a sunny mood at tea-time, half-asleep at dinner-time, alive but angry an hour or two later. It can be beautifully kind or stupidly cruel. It can make the best man look silly, and the greatest man afraid.[14]

Day after day, as it passes through these moods, the ordinary member watches those who bid to lead it; he meets them; he observes them in committee or in a party meeting; and slowly but surely, and often irrevocably (as not a few know to their cost), he judges and places them. In making his judgment, he is looking for character rather than cleverness; for the man he can trust; for the man with staying power. Ted Leather once told me that what most back-bench members looked for in a leader was someone "who will see the party through bad patches." Outsiders often wonder at the choices of the back-bench members—few outsiders, for example, would have chosen Attlee in 1935 or Macmillan in 1957—but it was the ordinary back-bench members, and not the outsiders, who were right.

IN THIS FUNCTION of weighing, testing and selecting party leaders, the House acts very like a stock exchange of reputation, and it is this which helps to give political activity a flavour that many people find distasteful. "The unsavoury element in Parliamentary life," Beatrice Webb wrote,

> is the intense competition for the limelight alike among Cabinet ministers and private members: the "stock" of individual members going up and down with dramatic, undeserved and incalculable suddenness. The itch for recognition becomes, in fact, rather a horrid symptom, manifested in all sorts of ways, by different persons—conscious and unconscious. Sidney is free from it in a quite unusual way.[15]

But the competition for the limelight is simply part of the test which a man must survive before he proves that he is entitled to the trust of the House or the support of his party. After he had been returned to Parliament at a by-election in 1952, Nigel Nicolson was standing at the bar of the Commons, waiting to take his seat, when a senior member whispered to him: "In a few minutes, you will walk behind the Speaker's chair into the obscurity from which you should probably never have emerged."

> It was my first lesson in parliamentary deflation. To come from the concentrated arc-lights, the excitement, the triumph of an election, to the goal of all your ambition, and find that the size of your majority is better known than your name, is an immediate reminder that you are of so little account that when you die or lose your seat, you will probably be replaced as easily as a broken window-pane.... It is not only the antiquity of Parliament which cuts a man down to size. It is its terrible power to sum up character and detect fraud.[16]

It is sometimes hard for the outsider, sitting in one of the galleries, to believe that the House possesses this terrible power—although, even from there, it is possible to watch a man's reputation take a plunge with one speech—but it is foolish to reject the evidence of the members who have actually endured it. Even the most intelligent, the most detached, agree that it exists; and it exists largely because of the shrewd common sense—the native prejudices and the natural suspicions—of the ordinary member.

BUT HIS ORDINARINESS has another virtue, and it lies beyond the House itself. To praise his ordinariness is to touch on the concept of amateurism which still lies at the heart of British politics: the concept which (as one student of Parliament has recently put it) is "kept in the foreground, providing for members a standard for their actions and prescribing their proper role."[17] It is unfashionable to see it in this way in these days, and the whole question requires further discussion. All that needs to be said for the moment is that the concept of amateurism has run deep in this country's politics since de Montfort's decision to call to Parliament representatives from the cities and boroughs as well as from the shires: to summon "those who work," as Maitland described them, to join with "those who pray" and "those who fight" in the central and public life of the country. To reject amateurism is to reject the deepest source of strength in our institutions.

Those in the central government whose task it was to organise civilian life during the 1939–

[14] A. P. Herbert, *Independent Member*, p. 48. The value of his book is that he was not only a literate, but a detached and amused member of the House.

[15] Beatrice Webb, *Diaries*, 1924–32, p. 26. But Sidney, of course, was not a very good politician, or a very successful one.

[16] Nigel Nicolson, *People and Parliament* (1958), p. 62.

[17] R. Young, *The British Parliament* (1962), p. 54.

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45 war were astonished to discover the number and the vigour of the voluntary and unofficial bodies which existed all over the country, capable of being put to useful service, and already possessing the habits of decision and discipline. "The spirit [of resistance] would have been useless save to prolong a slaughter had there not been a tradition of real self-government."[18] This tradition, which is the tradition of the amateur, is the foundation of our society and the life of our constitution, and the ordinary politician remains its highest exemplar.

Even the politics of Athens had their seamy side, and there is no need to pretend that all politicians in Britain approach any ideal (even if there could be an ideal politician). Some are stupid, some are dishonest, some are corrupt. All of them are impelled into public life by reasons which are not wholly disinterested. But no one can have known any considerable number of back-bench members of Parliament for any length of time without believing that a nation is fortunate in such ordinary counsellors. From day to day, the breezes of ambition play about them, and they brush against the skirts of power. Yet they never entirely forget the traditions and standards of Parliament. In them the habits and disciplines of a free and decent society find their most convincing public expression.

When a party faces a crisis—as, for example, the Conservative Party did at the time of the Suez operation—the ordinary member will then be found at his best. Anxious, confused, and perhaps angry, like most of his constituents, but also patient and refusing to panic, again like most of them, his steadying voice is at last heard. It is the voice, expressed through whichever party, of a country which has learned to steady itself by free debate, and is accustomed to the disciplines of free government.

The Ordinary Member

"THE TYPICAL Labour member and the typical Conservative member simply do not exist."[19] It is hard to know why anyone expects that they should. People's political views, and their choice of a career or even of a way of life, are determined by all kinds of factors, and they are never the same in any two persons. They may be determined, for one thing, by accident. There is no doubt that not only some back-bench members, but even a few who have ended up on the front bench, first entered the House of Commons almost by accident. This is especially true when there is a large turnover of seats, as in 1945, and candidates who were not seriously thinking of being elected find that they have been.[20] After 1945, indeed, it was even possible to point to one or two members whose choice of party had been largely accidental.

From time to time, the tireless body of political sociologists makes elaborate attempts to draw a composite picture of the back-bench member, by examining and tabulating his social background, his education, his occupation, his interests, his general attitudes, his religion, his prejudices, and even the literature which he confesses to reading. Most of these investigations succeed in making one or two interesting little points, but they leave a picture as unreal as an "identi-kit." This is hardly surprising. The reasons which take some men into public life, while others have no desire to go into it, or prefer to work behind the scenes, are largely reasons of personality. They are not necessarily very complex: a man may simply like the sound of his own voice. But it is these obvious factors which we must remember if we are to avoid the mistake of looking for a composite ideal back-bench member, and then try to attract him into the House.

There are men who have reached the back benches by accident, and others by intention; those who have been driven primarily by the wish to do some kind of public service, others who have sought only personal prestige; some who like (harmlessly enough) to see their names in the newspapers, others (it may be less harmlessly) who prefer the concealed influence of working in committee behind the scenes; a few who were persuaded, cajoled or browbeaten by their friends to stand for Parliament, many who themselves persuaded, cajoled and browbeat their friends; some who serve special interests, others whose disinterestedness is, if not too good to be true, at least too true to be good; some who are as good company as one could reasonably hope to find in so haphazardly collected a body of men, others who are such bores that even the fleet and the strong cannot escape them; some who speak well, others who can barely articulate; some who are unquestioning

[18] K. B. Smellie, *A Hundred Years of English Government* (1937), p. 289.

[19] P. G. Richards, *Honourable Members* (1964), p. 33.

[20] This was similarly true after the landslide to the Democrats in the 1964 elections in the United States.

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party men, others who could as well sit on one side of the House as the other; some who have ulcers, others who could survive months of all-night sittings and still be as untroubled as they were at the beginning; some who hate the House (but still would never willingly give it up), others who like it as if it were home from home; some who love their wives, others who seem to treasure the House for the opportunities it gives to escape from them; some who are fanatics for a policy, others who enjoy the cool business of handling men and affairs; some who have always wished to be in the House, others who until the very last day of their last Parliament seem never quite to understand how they arrived there in the first place—and in this they are usually not alone.

THIS MIXTURE OF PERSONALITIES is healthy and important. A representative assembly should be representative in many ways; and it should, not least, be representative of as many different kinds of personality as possible. This is quite as important as that it should be a mixture of different social classes, levels of income, and political attitudes. Any reform of the House of Commons which put too much emphasis on one sphere of its activities, and so tended to encourage only one kind of personality to enter politics, would impoverish it and them. This is, in fact, one of the most serious weaknesses of some of the proposals for the reform of the House of Commons which are put forward by academic observers, who seem curiously unable to develop any feel for the life of politics. The kind of emphasis which an academic commentator like Bernard Crick in his *The Reform of Parliament* (1964) places on the work of specialised committees, removed from the floor of the House, would encourage the committee man, but would discourage the man of strong general preconceptions about politics. There must be opportunities for showing off as well as for work, for dash (already far too rare) as well as for grinding business, for passion as well as for compromise, for men of widely different personalities to make their peculiar but equally valuable contributions to the life of the House.

THE IMPORTANCE OF WHAT is done by the whole House in the public eye is far too often underestimated. One example will do. Almost all the major votes taken before the House rises in the evening are foregone conclusions; it is easy, therefore, to argue that both the votes themselves and the debates that have preceded them are a waste of time. But the moment to watch is when the House begins to fill after dinner. The members of the House of Commons are usually dispersed for the greater part of the day, occupied by their own private affairs, by committees of the House or their party, by constituency work and by a score of other duties. It is when they crowd into the chamber after dinner, to hear the closing front-bench speeches, filling the benches and standing at the bar of the House, perhaps a little flushed with food and certainly noisier than at any other time of the day, that they become an assembly with a common life of its own. More often than not, the two closing front-bench speeches are more partisan than those with which the debate was opened; certainly, the members themselves are more partisan. Jeers, cheers, huzzas, interruptions become the order of the day. The conflict which the House exists to represent is, for this precious hour, open and usually unalloyed by any more business-like considerations. The House of Commons at this hour is a superb political animal.

It can be a testing hour for a minister or an opposition spokesman. Macmillan, for one, was usually the master of it: soothing the House, sometimes, and leaving the opposition silent, with a speech of *dignitas, gravitas,* and even (for nothing came amiss to him when he was at the height of his powers) *pietas*; on other occasions, quite willing to be the gutter-snipe, stinging the opposition into futile rage, until his own benches roared and bellowed their support behind him, and the day was carried on the floor as well as in the division lobbies. These occasions, with their "routs and discomfitures, rushes and rallies," are politics. At such moments, which can occur only when the House is meeting as a whole House in its own chamber, the flames of political conflict warm the front and back benches alike. Politics are quite as much a matter of morale, of grit, of "seeing a party through the bad patches," of anger, of humour, of personal loyalties and loyalty to party, of ordinary human passions and appetites, of demonstration and display, as of detailed control of policy and administration in the twilit zone of specialised committees.

Conflict—permanent conflict—is part of the life of politics, and it is only on the floor of the House, especially when it is packed and excited before a vote (even if that vote is already decided) that this conflict can be dramatically

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staged. It is then, too, that one can grasp the value of the back-bench member whose political qualities are otherwise elusive. The most preposterous member can, at such a moment, destroy a speech with an interjection—and an interjection, moreover, which a cleverer member would probably never have thought of making. The most inarticulate finds his voice, even if it is only to lead the growl of cheers which, more than any other noise, can rally a minister when he is in a tight corner. The House of Commons, as has been said, shows itself at these moments to be a superb political animal; and the back-bench members show themselves also to be superb political beasts.

It is, then, a great mistake to look for one kind of function which the House of Commons should perform, one kind of activity in which it should engage, and so one kind of member whom it should attract. Back-bench members should represent a wide variety of personality; and they should also represent as wide a variety of interests as possible. There is no need to go into details; they may be found in the appropriate works. It is enough here to quote the verdict of one careful student of the members, their activities and their interests:

> There must be few kinds of activity in Great Britain that cannot find, when necessary, a friend in the Commons.... It is clear that both employers and employed are abundantly represented in the Commons. So also are other social groupings.... There is a danger that unorganised opinion will go by default, but this is unlikely in the House of Commons where normally some Member is always ready with an opposing argument. (*P. G. Richards*)

Moreover, members will rightly always pay a great deal of attention to an interest or group within their constituencies. There can, in fact, be something very like a local representation of interests: Lancashire members (both Conservative and Labour) concerned to protect the cotton industry; the members for Coventry (both Conservative and Labour) acting as spokesmen of the motor industry; the members for the seaside resorts (predominantly, but not entirely, Conservative) watching their constituents' common interests.

In his study of back-bench members, Richards asks:

> What is more natural for an association for the Prevention of X or the Encouragement of Y to ask a Member, interested in these objects, to become a Vice-President or to serve on an Executive Committee? This is a sensible and desirable extension of the representative nature of the House of Commons.

In fact, almost every connection, which is not actually venal, between back-bench members and interests, groups and societies in the country is a "sensible and desirable extension of the representative nature of the House of Commons", and there is even something to be said for the marked rise of "public relations," "advisory" and "consultant" posts which members of both parties hold in various industries, firms and other bodies.[21] We are sometimes in danger of being too prudishly anxious for the purity of our members' consciences. They are meant to be in touch with what is alive and growing (and a few, even, with what is dying) in our society, and the more opportunities they can be offered for keeping in touch, the more actively representative the House of Commons will be.

But the back-bench member eventually justifies himself by the balance and perception with which, over the years, he performs the tasks of the politician as they were described earlier. He will perform them, usually, that much better when he has been a member for a number of years. It is all the more surprising, therefore, and yet perhaps not surprising, that an academic observer like Professor Crick should try to get round some of the weaknesses of his proposals by suggesting that back-bench members might be elected for one, or perhaps two, Parliaments, and then quietly retire:

> The present distinction between full-time and part-time Members could to great advantage give way to the more natural distinction between members with Ministerial aspiration, who would seek to remain in Parliament after each General Election, and men from the professions, from business and from the unions who would enter Parliament for a limited time and return to their colleagues.

It really is an astonishing and rather comic idea that we should recruit perhaps two-thirds of the House of Commons from people taking sabbatical leave.

[21] The opposite attitude was expressed in the *Times Literary Supplement* (21 February 1958): "The ideal back-bencher would be one who is wholly unfettered by any obligation to particular bodies, and who is sufficiently well-off financially not to depend on the patronage of any kind of pressure group." But such a man would have strong *personal* economic interests.

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Most people who enter politics have specific motives for doing so, usually a great deal stronger than the desire to do a short stretch in the House of Commons, and this is true of the back-bench as well as the front-bench, or potential front-bench, member. Most members, too, even those who have no ministerial ambitions, become keenly attached to the House of Commons, and to the life of politics, and would not willingly be removed from it after they had served for one or two Parliaments. It is, after all, uncommon for members to look forward to losing their seats at a general election, and some are even known to try to retain them. Moreover, if they try to get returned, their supporters in the constituencies rally to them, and these would not willingly give their "free, fiery and selfless toil" for a member who was only going to be a temporary member, on leave from his job. Constituency workers get to know their member (and his wife), and they develop a personal loyalty to him which may even survive disagreement. The member, similarly, gets to know them, gets to know his way round his constituency and his constituency association, whom to trust, whom to listen to, where his tried support lies, where he can afford to let votes go. The relationship between a member and his constituency is difficult enough as it is. It would be impossible and meaningless if the member were only there, so to speak, for the ride.

What is still more astonishing in Crick's proposal is that he seems not to realise that politics is an art to be learned, as much by the back-bench as the front-bench member, and that he learns largely by his own slowly accumulating experience, and by the already accumulated experience of his party, of older members, and of the House collectively. Politics would become a very jumpy business if it were conducted by men and women on the back benches who were there for only a short period, with no time to learn collectively, or to acquire any collective spirit. A shifting population of temporary members might, as Crick seems to suggest, spend from nine to six every day palely accumulating information in specialised committees; but, since they had no time to become politicians, it is extremely doubtful that they would know how to make political use of it.

With all his apparent faults, the back-bench member as we already know him is almost precisely suited to his tasks. Interested in politics, from whatever motives; anxious to remain in politics, for whatever reasons; part-time perhaps in the hours he gives, but full-time in his determination to get himself and his party returned; and, above all, enjoying the game for its own sake; he is a genuine political animal. We should be careful not to jettison him for whatever impertinent replacement the London School of Economics may offer us.

The Extraordinary Member

ORDINARINESS may be a virtue on the back benches, but on the front benches extraordinary men are needed. Again, it is not necessary to exaggerate their virtue in order to appreciate their quality. "A grain of malice to an ounce of public spirit and constructive zeal" was Beatrice Webb's characteristic recipe for the politician who would leave a mark. The driving force may be no more than a craving for public life, as Austen Chamberlain pointedly remarked about Morley:

> Though in theory Morley gave the highest place to letters and declared that he would sooner have been the author of the *Decline and Fall* than Mr. Pitt, he had what almost amounted to a craving for public life. He was equally ready to be either hero or martyr, to be crowned with laurels or to be burned at the stake, but the author's life did not satisfy him; he longed for the limelight and the perils and the triumphs of the platform.

In others, it may be an equally egotistical hankering to work—always to be working—behind the scenes. Once again, Beatrice Webb, with her feline observation of those who crossed her path, put her finger on the point:

> Haldane has one overpowering impulse: he likes to be and to feel himself to be behind the scenes at the seat of power. That was one reason he came over to Labour: that is why he has always been anxious to collaborate with any Government—Tory, Coalition, as well as Liberal.

Like ordinary politicians, the extraordinary politicians who govern, or aspire to govern, the country have been carried into politics by varied motives and abilities, and find in the life of politics very different kinds of satisfaction.

The most obvious characteristic which distinguishes them is that they enjoy the game of politics to a heightened degree. Politics, it has been said, is "a continual contest with more than one opponent: anyone who takes up a political cause finds himself a variety of opponents." This, in itself, is enough to fascinate: as another political student has writ-

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ten, "Complicated negotiations, taking decisions on new problems, battling against odds are stimulating to the intellectually curious and venturesome." The game is fascinating also because the knowledge which it most requires of the politician is a knowledge of human nature: the nature of the other politicians with whom he must deal, and the nature of the millions of ordinary people whose lives will be affected by what he does. Lastly, as Amery said, politics is a game which the politician can play by his own rules and for his own chosen goals: if he gets up early enough in the morning, he may even prepare the pitch. Not to enjoy the whole of this game, and to enjoy it shamelessly, is to disqualify oneself immediately from playing it.

IT IS A TOUGH GAME, in which the extraordinary politician will be sustained, first of all by a heightened ambition. Ambition is the quality in a politician which many people seem to find most objectionable. But it is, in fact, one of his most necessary virtues. Where, one wonders, do they expect to find the driving force in a politician? Presented with a politician without ambition, all one can do is cry, as Roy Campbell did in a different context: "But where's the bloody horse?" It is humbug to expect a politician to lack ambition; and it is humbug in a politician not to recognise that he is moved by it, to pretend that he is driven solely by a concern for the people's good or even by a divine call. A little after he became Prime Minister in 1868, Gladstone wrote in his diary:

> I ascend a steepening path with a burden ever gathering weight. The Almighty seems to sustain and spare me for some purpose of His own, deeply unworthy as I know myself to be. Glory be to His name.

It really is much more straightforward and convincing to cry, as Macmillan did when he became Prime Minister in 1957: "Where is the Chief Whip? We're off to the Turf to celebrate."

"There is no doubt, gentlemen," Disraeli said with characteristic candour to his constituents at Shrewsbury, in 1844,

> that all men who offer themselves as candidates for public favour have motives of some sort. I candidly acknowledge that I have, and I will tell you what they are; I love fame; I love public reputation; I love to live in the eye of the country; and it is a glorious thing for a man who has had my difficulties to contend against.

Churchill, in the words of his hero, Savrola, was as emphatic:

> A people's good! That, he could not disguise from himself, was the direction rather than the cause of his efforts. Ambition was the motive force, and he was powerless to resist it.... Vehement, high, daring was his cast of mind. The life he lived was the only one he could ever live; he must go on to the end.

This is better than humbug.

But there is more to be said for ambition. Not only is it a natural motive, Disraeli argued: it could be a self-disciplining and even a noble one. It was ambition which alone could save Coningsby from indolence and profligacy:

> ... that noble ambition, the highest and the best, that must be born in the heart and organised in the brain, which will not let a man be content, unless his intellectual power is recognised by his race, and desires that it should contribute to their welfare. It is the heroic feeling: the feeling that in the old days produced demi-gods; without which no State is safe; without which political institutions are meat without salt, the Crown a bauble, the Church an establishment, Parliaments debating clubs, and Civilisation itself but a fitful and transient dream.

"I trust," Disraeli said after Palmerston's death in 1865, "that the time may never come when the love of fame shall cease to be the sovereign passion of our public men."

Ambition drives even the apparently most unassuming of politicians. It explains, for example, the otherwise inexplicable rise of Bonar Law. From Carlyle, wrote Birkenhead,

> Bonar Law imbibed early the stimulus of an honourable ambition which never deserted him in later life. Mr. Asquith is said—I know not with what truth—to have described him once as "meekly ambitious." But I can detect no moment in a distinguished career at which he has shown any undue meekness.

Austen Chamberlain, who had good reasons for knowing, said the same:

> He was not mildly but intensely ambitious—I sometimes think he was the most ambitious man whom I have known in politics. I once confessed to him that I had made many attempts to read Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, but had never succeeded in persevering to the end. He was astonished and declared at once that he found that great procession of ambitious men, realising their ambitions only to be cheated of their hopes, the most fascinating of all studies. He knew that he was ambitious and could not understand why others did not perceive it. "You make a great mistake about me," he once told members of the Press

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> Gallery at the House of Commons when they entertained him at luncheon. "You think I am a modest man with no ambitions. I am really very ambitious." And when he had to deliver his Rectorial Address at Glasgow University, he chose "Ambition" as his theme.

The story of how Austen Chamberlain and Walter Long persuaded themselves in 1911 to stand down in order to let Bonar Law become leader of the Conservative Party—while Law (according to J. L. Garvin) remained "inflexible, quite determined to get the position if he could and quite satisfied that he was fully qualified for it"—is one of the most intriguing insights into political character that we have. Eleven years later, of course, Bonar Law was to do much the same again and, again outwitting Chamberlain, became Prime Minister.

WITH AMBITION, THERE GOES ruthlessness. The extraordinary politician, as he clambers and claws his way upwards, cannot do without it. There have been few more honourable politicians than Austen Chamberlain, but there have been few also who have been more ineffective. Unwilling to risk the unity of his party, in 1911, for the sake of his own ambition, he abdicated all claims to its leadership, when it could probably have been his, with scarcely a murmur. Again, in 1917, he resigned on the report of the Mesopotamian Commission, and again without a murmur; indeed, his speech of resignation was largely a defence of others and not of himself. Yet again, five years later, when he was already leader of the Conservative Party in the House of Commons, he once more abdicated it (and with it the almost certain succession to the premiership) on grounds of loyalty and principle, rejecting every effort to induce him to abandon the Coalition Government. Such a catalogue of honourable acts is rare in politics, but we should not be seduced by it. As Birkenhead said of him: "Austen always played the game, and he always lost it." That is not politics.

Attlee once said that ruthlessness was the most important quality in a politician at the top, and his own was "not far short of cruelty." It could be found in Pitt:

> Nothing made him so "bilious," he said once, as Cabinet reconstruction, but few so freely reconstructed; nor did he wait upon personal feelings, or decent intervals, for the weeding out of inefficiency. He removed his brother with the same determination, though with very different expression, that he employed in the case of Thurlow. Against Addington, after long resistance to multifarious intrigue, he moved, when he did, with resolution and on public grounds.

Of Lloyd George, it has been said that "he showed little mercy to those who were broken in his service," and that he had "a kind of animal repulsion from a sick member of the herd." Churchill (as Boothby has pointed out) would pick up and drop men at will, according to their usefulness to him for the moment. Both Macmillan and Gaitskell owed their rise to the leadership of their parties as much to ruthlessness in their personal relationships as to any other single quality; and, both before and since he became leader of the Labour Party, Wilson's personal relationships have had a cold calculation in them.

We must not be fastidious. Ruthlessness is necessary in politics for many obvious reasons, but also because of the limitations which are imposed on the politician's freedom of movement and decision in other ways. Not even a Prime Minister can choose freely with whom he will work. Political circumstances largely dictate who his colleagues will be and, even if they are all congenial to him, which is unlikely enough, that does not mean that they will necessarily be congenial to each other. The kind of situation in which a Prime Minister may find himself is vividly described in Shinwell's account of Attlee's Cabinet reshuffle in 1947:

> The coterie of the party which heartily disliked my handling of the fuel crisis became more stringent in their demands for my removal. The Prime Minister took no notice of them for some time, but eventually summoned me to his office and said that he was considering making a change. The Minister of Fuel was no longer to be in the Cabinet.
>
> My meeting with the Prime Minister was quite brief. It was clear that the Cabinet reshuffle was only beginning. I was offered the War Office, and at once firmly refused it. I was then asked to think over three possibilities: Minister without Portfolio with a Cabinet seat, Minister of Defence, or remain as Minister of Fuel, the last very doubtful.
>
> I was again summoned to the Prime Minister's room a day or two later, and gained the impression that there was some anxiety lest I should go to the back benches. Attlee told me that the Minister without Portfolio would have to go to the Lords, so that was out. There was no vacancy in Defence. As regards staying in Fuel—"there was no chance at all of my staying." In confirmation of this he had Whiteley, the Labour Whip, come in who confirmed that there was criticism of me in the Parliamentary Labour

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> Party over the fuel crisis. I was left in no uncertainty. It was the War Office or nothing.[22]

Shinwell was succeeded as Minister of Fuel by his own Parliamentary Secretary, Hugh Gaitskell, and thus began a protracted, rancorous, and public hostility to the future leader of his party.

Even a government of all the talents is likely to be a government of all the vanities as well—pertinacious intriguing, prickly sensitiveness, irritable genius, self-deceiving rectitude—and without a degree of ruthlessness no political leader could make a team of them. This may seem, to some, to make politics an unattractive business, and they may regret the trusted figure of an Austen Chamberlain. But politics, at the highest level, is a game which is played to be won, and so it should be, since our prosperity and our lives, to a greater or lesser extent, may be at stake.

AMBITION, RUTHLESSNESS—and stamina. The extraordinary politician must be a man of physical and moral stamina. In his memoirs, *Beginning Again* (1964), Leonard Woolf tells of an occasion when Ramsay MacDonald had "come straight down from Lossiemouth and was going to the House in the afternoon for an important debate at which he was going to make an important speech." They met for lunch "over the dreary rissoles of the 1917 Club":

> As we walked away he told me that he had influenza and that his temperature was 102, but that he must go and make his speech. I think it was in fact probably true that he had travelled down in the night train from Scotland with a temperature of 102, had eaten his rissoles, had talked without stopping, and would go on to make his speech—all without turning a hair, for he had the kind of iron constitution which is the first and, when I think of the Prime Ministers I have known, perhaps the only necessary qualification or asset which a man must possess if he is to become Prime Minister.

The need for an iron constitution has not been created only by the business of the modern politician's life. As Motley wrote of the abdication of Charles V:

> ...his appetite remained, while his stomach, unable longer to perform the task still imposed on it, occasioned him constant suffering. Physiologists, who know how important a part this organ plays in the affairs of life, will perhaps see in this physical condition of the Emperor, a sufficient explanation, if explanation were required, of his descent from the throne.

Macmillan's descent from the premiership in 1963, however convenient it may have been for his party, had the same "sufficient explanation."

Any political journalist who has followed any leading politician during a long tour, either at home or abroad, learns to respect the iron constitution of those who are set in authority over him. They need not all display it with the zest of a Churchill or, perhaps even more remarkably, of a Palmerston who, at the age of 80,

> ate for dinner two plates of turtle soup; he was then served very amply to a plate of cod and oyster sauce; he then took a pâté; afterwards he was helped to two very greasy-looking entrées; he then dispatched a plate of roast mutton; there then appeared before him the largest, and to my mind the hardest, slice of ham that ever figured on the table of a nobleman, yet it disappeared, just in time to answer the inquiry of his butler, "Snipe, my Lord, or pheasant?" He instantly replied "Pheasant," thus completing his ninth dish of meat at that meal....

To expect so much of the modern politician is vain. But the physical stamina will always be there, even when—and sometimes especially when—there is a physical disability.

On 10 October, 1876, Joseph Chamberlain wrote to Dilke: "...if he [Gladstone] were to come back for a few years (he can't continue in public office for very much longer)...."[23] But Gladstone did come back, and he was still Prime Minister seventeen years later, having in the meantime conducted the most violent personal campaign that the country had until then known, having imposed his personal will on the question of Home Rule, and having in the process wrecked his party for twenty years to come. This physical and moral stamina is the stuff of the extraordinary politician. A body and a spirit which give way when the Suez Canal is flowing through the drawing room of No. 10 Downing Street are not the body and spirit of a great politician.

AMBITION, ruthlessness, stamina—and the ability to judge men and occasions. Macaulay, in his sketch of Walpole, wrote that Walpole was "better acquainted than any man of his day with what it concerned him most to

[22] Emanuel Shinwell, *Conflict Without Malice* (1955), p. 186.
[23] J. L. Garvin, *The Life of Joseph Chamberlain* (1932), Vol. I, p. 240.

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know: mankind. . . ." Knowledge of the men with whom he must deal is of vital importance to the extraordinary politician. Not everyone can hope to have Lloyd George's "eerie intuition, subtlety, divination," as Birkenhead called it, which enabled him

> with equal clarity and vision to peer into the minds of men and multitudes. I have never known anyone who discovered as quickly as Mr. Lloyd George what was in the minds of those who spoke with him; and I do not believe there has ever been a man who discerned more swiftly and certainly the moods of an assembly.

Riddell, who knew him well, talked of Lloyd George's use of the "art of subtle indirection" in his relations with people. "No one," he said, "is more facile in the use of hints, slight changes in manner and inflections of voice." But, if Lloyd George was exceptional in these gifts, all politicians must have them developed to some degree.

The more they are developed, the less trouble will be the decision of awkward issues. The real points which must be settled should be obscured as little as possible by the pettiness or the pride of the mere selfishness of those involved. Disraeli was wonderfully gifted at knowing when a man's opposition should be taken seriously. His letter to Carnarvon, who had offered his "provisional resignation" in 1878, could well be taken as a model by any prime minister dealing with an over-sensitive colleague. Disraeli began by regretting the course which Carnarvon was proposing to take,

> if only for the cause of its occasioning you to write so many letters and I to answer them.
>
> There is no adequate cause for yr. tendering the resignation of yr. office at this moment, and I shd. be quite unable to inform the Queen what was the reason of yr. retirement. These are not the times when statesmen shd. be too susceptible. We have enough to encounter without wasting our energies in contests among ourselves.
>
> I shall not therefore submit yr. resignation to H.M. . . .

Unless he had used shorthand, it is difficult to see how Disraeli's reply could have been more crushing or more deserved.

The ability to judge occasions is as important as the ability to judge men. The two examples which are given below may seem to be slight ones—much greater ones could be given—but political decisions depend more than is usually understood on the handling of comparatively slight occasions. It is in the slight occasions, too, that we can see most clearly the hand of the politician, uncomplicated by the working of great passions. One does not see how a seaman tacks when the wind has reached gale force; and it is tacking which is the most constantly useful skill of the politician.

None was better at it than Baldwin—which is why he was very much a politician's politician—and Duff Cooper described in his autobiography, *Old Men Forget* (1953), how Baldwin handled the attempt of a Conservative private member to alter the basis of the trade unions' political levy in 1925. The right wing of the Conservative Party supported the measure (which was a private member's bill), and on 25 February a deputation of Conservative members who opposed the bill, of whom Duff Cooper was one, called on the Prime Minister in order to win his support. Baldwin, as Duff Cooper recorded, answered them characteristically:

> The Prime Minister replied that he regretted the division in the party, but there it was and it had to be faced. One side would have to be disappointed, and that was all he could say at present.

Two days later, Baldwin rose in the House of Commons and opposed the measure. Duff Cooper wrote in his diary:

> The Prime Minister's speech had a wonderful effect on the House. It was vague and rather off the point, and although I liked it myself I was afraid that it wouldn't impress other people. But it did; and completely silenced all those who were most vehement for the bill. I saw a member sitting near me with a carefully prepared speech on many sheets of paper, tearing it into little pieces and throwing them on the floor.

What had Baldwin done? He had, in private, avoided giving any indication of his views which would either exacerbate the party divisions or set his opponents in the party busy with lobbying and exhortation; and, on the floor of the House, he had again avoided increasing the bitterness within his own party. Moreover, by obscuring the issue, by being "vague and rather off the point," he had prevented the legalistic arguments of the Scottish lawyer who had promoted the bill from carrying undue weight. Perhaps the literary critics of politics would have preferred Baldwin to make an outspoken speech in defence of principle, to take up a stand. But would Baldwin then have carried the day; and, if not, what would have been the point?

A similar example occurred at the annual

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Conservative conference in 1958, when R. A. Butler began his long campaign to educate the Conservative Party into a more humane attitude to crime and punishment. As Home Secretary, he was faced with a vehement demand from the floor of the conference for the reintroduction of flogging. He was determined to resist the demand. He could well have made a strong speech condemning flogging, which would have gladdened the hearts of the Howard League for Penal Reform and the Editor of the *Guardian*. But he was not addressing the Howard League; he was not trying to win the approval of the *Guardian* or the *Observer*. He was addressing the annual Conservative Party conference. As he spoke, many wondered what he was about. His arguments slipped, elided, reformed and then, just in time, escaped again, before the opposition in the hall could catch hold of them. When he sat down, the very delegates who had been demanding the reintroduction of flogging cheered him to the echo, although he had given them not a tittle of anything they had asked. Again, the literary critics of politics have to ask themselves whether a clear statement of principle would have enabled Butler to do what he wanted to do. Would it have been preferable if he had provoked opposition, instead of turning its flank? The politician is concerned with doing things, and not with displaying his own attitudes.

The end of the story came at the annual Conservative conference in 1961. Then, after a debate of an impressively high standard on both sides, the conference enthusiastically supported Butler's attempt to humanise the treatment of criminals. The subject has never again dominated the minds of the party workers in the constituencies, and it is unlikely that it ever again will. Butler's patience and courage through these years—he was not always given the public support he was entitled to expect from his colleagues, and especially from his prime minister—deserve a tribute. But so does the astuteness, the ability to judge occasions. He fought the battle with a superb sense of timing, from inside the party; and from there he converted it. It could not have been done in any other way; and perhaps by no other man.

ENJOYMENT IN THE GAME, ambition, ruthlessness, stamina, the ability to judge men and occasions: these may not seem to be lofty qualities to look for in the extraordinary politician. But they are, in fact, the reassuring ones. We should not, in all this, be too squeamish. "It was a situation after Elizabeth's own heart, demanding caution, secrecy and valiant lying," writes Neale of her handling of the awkward question, whether she should openly help the Scottish rebels against the Regent, Mary of Guise. We, also, may hope that, at the appropriate moment, our politicians are capable of "caution, secrecy and valiant lying"—and capable of them, too, without being detected. No political journalist who has had the opportunity to watch (at reasonably close quarters) the intrigues to get rid of an Attlee, a Churchill, an Eden, a Macmillan or a Douglas-Home, and seen the interests and forces involved, can doubt that politics would be a wretched and frivolous business if the extraordinary politician were not endowed with qualities which have been described here.

Politics is not a prize-giving or a garden fête. It is the attempt to reconcile the all too discordant appetites, wills, interests and aspirations of men—whether men in the mass, in society, as was said at the beginning; or individual men, in the closets of power—in no more than the hope that any decision will at least be in the direction of the people's good. To this attempt, the extraordinary politician brings qualities which we should learn to appreciate, even to savour. It is dirty work in the engine room. But the ship would not move without it—or those prepared to undertake it.

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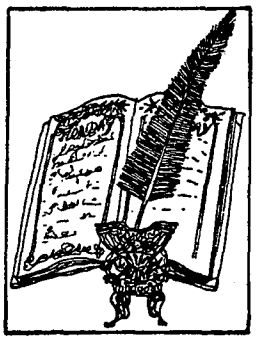

Column

ISRAEL'S military victory in the Middle East was so swift and complete that it hardly gave people time to adjust their ideas to the totally changed situation it created. Yet considerable adjustment was necessary. At one moment, Israel, surrounded and outnumbered, was menaced with total annihilation; twenty-four hours later the threat had ceased to exist and the Arab armies had been destroyed. So brilliant a victory was breathtaking, like some dazzling transformation scene in a pantomime; one wondered how it was done. After all, in Viet Nam, the greatest military power in the world had been fighting for years, with an immense superiority of force, without advancing any nearer to victory; it is not true that, as Peregrine Worsthorne has suggested, when an advanced modern state goes to war against a backward and primitive one the result is, always and inevitably, complete and instant victory. The *blitzkrieg* is still the exception and not the rule in modern war; in the desert, it was carried out in its purest and most classical form.

But the war not only transformed the political and military situation in the Middle East; it also changed certain ideas which have influenced people's political attitudes all over the world and hence has left behind, not only the shattered debris of Egypt's aeroplanes and tanks, but a large degree of intellectual confusion, which will take far longer to clear up than the battlefield. The great powers, whose influence on events was for four days rather like Lady Clara Vere de Vere's, "splendidly null," have shown some evidence that they realise this. Their evident anxiety that in some way or other the *status quo ante* should be restored, even though this was clearly impossible; their wise and empty words appealing to everyone, including each other, to start again from scratch as if nothing had happened, the victors denied the fruits of victory, the vanquished rejecting all thoughts of revenge; the pretence that there was now a hope that the combatants, and the powers themselves, might suddenly rise superior to all those passions and interests of which the war was the direct result; perhaps all this was simply confession that things had got out of hand, and that the war, and its consequences, simply could not be assimilated into that elaborate and sophisticated war-game in which the powers have indulged for so long, and which they flatter themselves is necessary to the peace of the world. It was as if, in a game of chess, pawns had suddenly started to behave like knights and rooks, even queens, leaving the players quite baffled how to proceed, except if possible to call it a draw and start again.

ONE ASPECT OF THE CONFUSION arising out of the war is that it has emphasised, as perhaps nothing else ever has, the unique status of the state of Israel, which so bristles with contradictions that it quite escapes from all the categories which condition political thinking about international affairs today. In a world in which colonialism is the dirtiest of all dirty words, Israel is a colonial power which, founded upon an initial act of conquest, has now extended its territory by further conquests. Yet her right to existence is fundamentally a moral one, as the only means of affording her people an asylum from the suffering, persecution and humiliation they have endured for centuries. Israel is a Middle-eastern Semitic state; yet it is also, alone among its neighbours, a progressive modern society, whose strongest intellectual ties are with the West, and for that reason is, although a mini-state, also the most powerful state in the Middle East. It is also, potentially, the weakest. Though one of the youngest of states, not yet twenty years old, its history goes back for over two thousand years. A state which was founded as a home for a race of exiles, its existence has created one of the greatest refugee problems in the world. Its people have suffered more than any other from racial persecution; but it is only the intensity of their own racial consciousness that has enabled them to survive their tribulation. A land of the oppressed, the insulted and injured, it has now suddenly emerged as a warrior state of the prophet armed.

One might prolong this list of contradictions indefinitely, without exhausting it. It is not surprising, therefore, that arguments either for or against Israel should nearly always depend on suppressing one or other of the paradoxical realities on which it is founded. Thus Bernard Levin, himself a Jew (though somewhat uncertain about what this really means), has hastened to insist that Israel, being a nation-state like any other, has no claim upon his loyalties, which he, as a British citizen, owes solely and exclusively to his country of birth, residence, and choice. No doubt other Jews feel the same way, and Jewish history offers good reasons why they should, because persecution has often been based on the charge that they can never be loyal citizens. Yet at the same time such a feeling denies all the reasons which give Israel a claim on the loyalties not merely of Jews but of

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Gentiles, to whatever nation they belong. The dilemma which Mr. Levin raises is a false one because Israel, though a state, is not merely a state but an idea, implying claims which transcend all national boundaries.

Thus Gentiles as well as Jews may find their situations complicated in relation to Israel. Philip Toynbee, having written a letter to *The Times* urging unqualified British support for Israel, immediately followed it with another, as if he had fallen among thieves, dissociating himself from Professor Max Beloff (who had urged the same appeal as his), and explaining that Israel deserved support, not because Jews were Jews, but because Jews were human beings. One was inclined to wonder what, in that case, Palestinian Arabs are. But such complexities of the intellectual's conscience are difficult to follow. It is in fact precisely because Jews are Jews, with the tragic burden of history they carry, that the state they have created has the right to the sympathy and support of the entire western world, over and above the obligations it owes to human beings in the abstract.

Mr. Levin and Mr. Toynbee offer us examples of, if not exactly lonely, at least individual intellectuals wrestling with some of the problems of conscience raised by the war in the Middle East. But the war has also raised, in an acute form, and on a more public stage, the problem of the relationship of Zionism, and its offspring, Israel, to the liberal and progressive forces to which, until now, Zionism has looked for support. In the not so distant past, that relationship took the form, despite many sectarian, almost theological, disagreements, of a natural alliance of the children of starvation with the wretched of the earth, and on the whole it has continued to follow this pattern up to the present day. One of its most typical manifestations has been the support given, in the United States, by the large Jewish population of New York, and other great cities, and especially by its most radical elements, to Zionism abroad and to progressive (and specifically Democratic) policies at home.

Today, that original alliance, and the ideas which inspired it, are apt to have a rather Utopian air, as of a world in which the brotherhood of man necessarily implied the protection of national minorities. This is not the world in which we live today, more especially since the time when Soviet policy, both at home and abroad, has propagated the doctrine that Zionism, and Israel, are agents of aggressive imperialism. In the case of the war in the Middle East, the alliance of Zionism and the radical Left suddenly came under intense strain, because radical movements have already, as it were, another war on their hands, in Viet Nam, which they have almost unanimously condemned, in varying degrees, as an act of American imperialist aggression.

How to reconcile condemnation of the war in Viet Nam with support for Israel in a *blitzkrieg* which has brought her a large extension of territory and provoked a new exodus of the indigenous Arab population? For Communist parties as such the question does not arise; but for Communists who are also Jews it does, and equally for radical movements, and individual radicals, who have associated themselves with Communist parties in unequivocal condemnation of the war in Viet Nam. In Britain, in France, in Italy, the choice has led to withdrawals from the Communist party comparable with those caused by the Soviet Union's suppression of the Hungarian revolt. Germany, typically, has split down the middle. No country has come out more strongly in support of Israel than the German Federal Republic, where there is no Communist party; no country has more violently and viciously condemned her than the German Democratic Republic, where there is nothing else.

But the war has also led to appeals for help to Israel in which intellectuals of all political complexions, Gentile or Jew, radical or conservative, bond or free, have united. In Paris, Berlin, Zurich, and New York, warring ideological factions were for a historic moment reconciled; Sartre with Aron and Mauriac, Grass with Enzensberger, Frisch with Dürrenmatt, Dwight Macdonald and Michael Harrington with Irving Kristol and Daniel Bell. General de Gaulle has been faced by a revolt in his own party; the Gaullist rally in support of Israel led by Claude Servan-Schreiber and Giscard d'Estaing was joined by Communist party members who announced: "Between the party line and Israel—I have chosen." It goes without saying that in Britain Lord Russell and Ralph Schoenman took time off from denouncing the United States to condemn Israel for "aggression." But it is significant that, among all the public demonstrations of opinion inspired by the war, whether for or against Israel, there was no evidence of any form of spontaneous support for the Arab States, even in Britain, where the *mystique* of Arabia flourished for so long, until, as it would now appear, it finally died at Suez.

But perhaps the most interesting evidence of the political and intellectual confusion provoked by the war has been provided by the United States. In some cases, doves on Viet Nam have been transformed into hawks on Israel; in others a strange kind of logic has demanded that, once a dove, always a dove, in the Middle East as in Viet Nam. The conflict of opinion has been

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clearly evident in the most active and effective organised body of liberal, academic, and intellectual opinion, Americans for Democratic Action, with results that show that "democratic action" in Viet Nam may in fact be leading to a kind of neo-isolationism. Even before the strain provoked by the war, John Kenneth Galbraith, the chairman of *A.D.A.*, had to disavow a resolution proposed by Arthur Schlesinger and Richard Goodwin, and passed in Professor Galbraith's absence, that in next year's Presidential election *A.D.A.* should support any candidate who opposed the war in Viet Nam; the resolution might, as Professor Galbraith pointed out, have committed *A.D.A.* to support of a candidate who, though satisfactory on Viet Nam, was unsatisfactory on every other issue (ex-Senator Goldwater, for instance).

War in the Middle East, however, restored some political harmony to Harvard and New York; both Professor Galbraith and Professor Schlesinger refused to subscribe to a pro-Israeli manifesto signed by 300 intellectuals, which appeared as a full-page advertisement in the *New York Times*. Professor Schlesinger's reason for refusing to sign was significant: "I think it inconsistent to favour unilateral intervention in one part of the world when I'm already opposed to unilateral intervention in another part of the world. . . ." Such an attitude to American policy has interesting implications. Does it mean that Professor Schlesinger, and perhaps Professor Galbraith also, would now prescribe for the United States a self-denying ordinance against unilateral intervention in any foreign theatre, whatever the reason or whatever the circumstances? It would be interesting to know the answer; more especially because the inconsistency from which Professor Schlesinger shrinks does not, in fact, appear to be any inconsistency at all. Senator Robert Kennedy may have been wary of the implication of his academic advisers' new doctrine, or he may have a harder sense of political realities, including the Jewish vote in New York, and less fear of being inconsistent; in any case he has, like the senior Senator for New York, expressed the strongest possible support for Israel.

In Britain, the repercussions of the war have been curious. There has been little of that organised demonstration of support for Israel which has been so striking in France; intellectuals, in particular, usually so eager to express their opinions, have been notably cautious and reserved in their comments. What has been remarkable, however, was the overwhelming pro-Israeli response of the man in the street, the pub, and the bus queue, and, equally, the almost complete absence of the kind of anti-Semitism which was once an ordinary feature of English life. As one Jew said to me when military operations were over: "I haven't heard an anti-Semitic remark this week—not even in White's." Equally lacking was any evidence of that pro-Arab sentiment which once had so large an influence on British policy, particularly in the Foreign Office. But I begin to note now a curious new (or old) tone which led one press commentator to warn Israelis against the "mercilessness of Shylock" and another to refer to the Old Testament as "a kind of Jewish *Mein Kampf*. . . ."

The ordinary man's response was in itself a reflection of one of the most remarkable achievements of the state of Israel; that is to say, to transform the popular image of the Jew, so that it has come to represent something which the great majority regard with respect and admiration, and this is itself only the counterpart of the feelings of pride, of confidence and self-respect which Jews all over the world have acquired as a result of the foundation of Israel. This, just as much as Israel itself, has been one of the greatest achievements of Zionism, and it was this, just as much as any political issue, which was at stake in the Middle East. When General Dayan said that Israel did not need British boys to die for her, he was saying something which expressed the total transformation that has taken place in the relations between the Jew and his fellow men.

There may even have been a touch of envy in the sympathy which the ordinary Englishman has felt for Israel during the present crisis. One of the most striking indirect effects of the war has been the degree to which it has exposed the decline of British influence in the Middle East, to a point indeed which it would be fair to describe as zero. While the war lasted, most Englishmen watched it rather in the spirit of a spectator at a football match, with not much doubt with which side he was involved, but with no sense that he himself could play any part in the game or affect its result, except perhaps by cheering from the side lines.

What is curious, and perhaps even slightly sinister, is that this realisation of the total impotence of British foreign policy, at the moment, and in any area where her influence was once paramount, has been accepted with an indifference which amounts to apathy. No doubt it is a sane and healthy instinct to take sober stock of one's resources, or lack of them; it is something different to accept with resignation that they have sunk so low that one has no longer any effective part to play, however loudly Mr. Wilson may proclaim that we have. He deceives no one, I think, except himself, but no one particularly minds so long as he himself remains satisfied to take the word for the deed.

R

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London

IN POLITICAL ARABIC *the key word is dignity. Throughout the present century indignity has been the Arab lot, foisted on successive generations—first by the Young Turks, then by the British and French, thanks to the asset of sheer might, and now, three times in 20 years, by the armed forces of Israel.*

Arabs and Egyptians are likewise unready to admit that their latest disquieting plunge from the heights of last week's unity into the depths of this week's humiliation is in part due to the nature of their language, which lends itself to hyperbole and inflammatory exaggeration in a degree that can perhaps best be measured by comparing Italians with English in this respect, and then multiplying the result at least fivefold.

THE TIMES

Quebec

I HOPE *the cultural emissaries of France know what they are taking on in Canada* [*writes Nicholas Monsarrat*]. *The speech of the Elysée bears the same relation to the speech of Quebec as wine does to paraffin.*

Just as Afrikaners express themselves in a guttural baby-talk which is a slipshod derivation of Dutch, so French-Canadians speak their own patois, *which can best be described as Gallic scouse. It is called* joual, *a word which is itself a mucky version of* cheval—*i.e., horse-French, a long-legged cousin of pig-Latin. I knew there must be something wrong with horse-French when, shortly after a Press conference, a local newspaper proclaimed that Mr. Monsarrat spoke* "un Français presque impeccable." *I do not, and they do not. I think the situation was best summed up by my Paris publisher, who told me: "They speak the French of a province which has never existed."*

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

Georgetown (Guyana)

THE OBITUARY NOTICE *of Arthur Ransome mentions that while he was in Russia in 1913–1917 he used to relate Negro folk tales which were called "Nancy Stories" because they began "My dear Nancy."*

Here in Guyana, the term "a nancy story" is common everyday parlance for a far-fetched yarn or even a downright lie. It is accepted that the term derives from the Negro stories for children, widely current here and in the West Indies, which have as their chief character Anansi, the cunning and invincible spider man. These stories have been collected and were published first in 1956 by Dr. Philip Sherlock under the title Anansi, the Spider Man. *Anansi stories are still also current in West Africa.*

A "Nancy Story" is thus one of the very few fragments of African culture which survived transplantation with the slaves and took root in this region. It would be a pity if it were wrongly attributed to the accidental choice of the name of some little girl called Nancy.

THE TIMES

London

THE ARMY *is likely to be reported to the Race Relations Board, because a regimental newspaper published what a county councillor calls "an anti-coloured poem." It appeared in* Castle, *the journal of the Royal Anglian Regiment, entitled "England, My England." Sample stanza:*

Send for friends from Pakistan, tell them:
"Come quick as can."
Many of us on the dole, lovely suit and big bank roll.
National Assistance is a boon, all the darkies on it soon.

The United Nations Association's report on the journal to the Defence Secretary, said: "It is disgraceful."

SUNDAY TELEGRAPH

London

THREE HIGH COURT JUDGES *ruled yesterday that an angry doctor was not guilty of indecent language when he used the word "bastards."*

Lord Parker, the Lord Chief Justice, said: "I am quite satisfied that, while not encouraging people to use the term bastard of one another, it is quite impossible to say that the word in this context was indecent language. It may be highly insulting, but I am quite satisfied that it is not indecent."

Dr. Lees used the word because he was annoyed by building work next to his surgery, which he claimed was being damaged. He told workers that their bosses were "a pair of stupid bastards."

Dr. Lees' counsel at the appeal, quoted dictionary definitions of bastard, including: "One begotten and born out of wedlock; a kind of cloth of inferior or mixed quality; a sweet Spanish wine; and a sail used in the Mediterranean."

DAILY MAIL

London

WHAT *is the outcome of that supreme cultural event, the Afro-Asian Writers' Seminar just concluding in Peking? Premier Chou En-lai of China, congratulating the seminar on its success, stated the outcome precisely: "US imperialism is bound to be defeated! British imperialism is bound to be defeated! Soviet revisionism is bound to be defeated! The Arab people are sure to win!"*

Literature, undoubtedly, is bound to be defeated.

DAILY MIRROR

Ipswich

A MINISTRY OF HOUSING *inquiry was told yesterday that the entire Dickens family was united in vehement opposition to an application for the demolition of the Great White Horse Hotel, Ipswich, where Mr. Pickwick lost his way and found himself in the bedroom of "a middle-aged lady in yellow curl papers."*

Trust Houses Ltd., the owners of the hotel, are appealing against Ipswich Town Council's refusal to give planning consent for the demolition.

Mr. Eric Dickens Hawksley, a great-grandson of the novelist, said he had been in touch with every member of the Dickens family he could trace. "I have never known such complete unanimity in our family before."

An architect described the hotel's interior as "a hotch-potch of elements defying a lucid verbal description."

THE GUARDIAN

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Vernon Watkins

The Bloodhound

Dark submission in my eye
Disobeys the spur of speed
In favour of the wounded cry.
Though my impulse wakes, aware
Of truant fox and bounding hare,
In my master's true employ
Fault and tragedy I heed.
How should I judge or yet enjoy
The instincts of another breed?

Why, in sleep, do I carry the prints of a journey,
Do I track, then spring to my feet with unshed tears?
With every beat of the blood an evil is born;
But the sombre shines. It is not the bringing to justice,
Hindered by time, across the network of pathways,
Gives me the jowls of a judge, where anguish appears.
Little they know of joy who neglect the forlorn.
Without knowing guilt, who knows the conditions of pardon?

The retriever will answer the shot and return unbidden,
The greyhound triumphs in overtaking the hare,
But I have further to go and a longer task.
My slow concern is the hare's intermittent burden.
My bloodshot eyes, in closing, divine a fellow-
Sufferer. Since first I was given the scent, I'm aware
Of the vigil of the pursued, and villainy's mask.
And whoever holds me back on the leash must follow

My steps, then halt, concerned with a destination,
Then resume my circuitous course, where the scent prevails.
Do not relinquish your hold, but always, as now,
Trust me. Delay may reward me, even evasion
Bring me at last to truth, to the martyr's posture,
By many paths to a tree transfixed by nails,
Or on to a field of remorse, to a fallen bough,
To footprints under the bridge, and a folded vesture.

A fox, pursued by the hounds, has faith in water.
Where others doubt, where the scent goes down in a ship,
I sniff the edge of the jetty, and still persist.
Distance waits. The rope in the sea does not matter.
I know the delinquent crowd, the vindictive anger
Of the mob. They share the deceit of water. The grip
Of the hovering bird they fear, that drops on the wrist.
Truth? It falls, like the long thread holding the anchor,

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The Bloodhound

Sealed by the dying preacher. A scroll I render,
Born to track down injustice. I lick the wound;
And then it is footpad, footpad, nose to the ground,
Ear and eye to the trail. I detect a centre
The rest might pass, for a moment marks the abridgment
Of many untravelled miles, and the end is soon
Reached, and the end is exultant, whenever found,
So close, so true appears the pattern of judgment.

And true to judgment, I make my erratic journey,
Much though the longing comes to return unbidden,
Trusting the scent to discover my destination.
However devious the path through inconstant water,
I keep the log: my account of the trail I render,
Bringing to light what ferns or the scrub had hidden,
Had I gone the direct way. But, as filings quiver,
I turn, as needle to star, with insistent feet.

Unresting I follow the trail, a lugubrious attorney
To joy's keeper, the sleepless giver of rest,
Great judge of the unforgiving. To find his word
An exuberant calm lends meaning to every journey.
And how should the knight, where sorrow and worship meet,
Carved in stone, his fingers closed on his breast,
Tell his lady he has no need of his sword,
Traced I no path, to watch and lie at his feet?

None pursues his task in vain.
Judgment sent me out. These eyes
Are pledged to make the hidden plain.
By the living or the dead
I was shown a single thread,
And upon that thread a stain.
Love and sorrow made me wise,
Drawn from darkness to explain
The errors none can exorcise.

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THEATRE

Antonin Artaud

By Nicola Chiaromonte

EARLY IN 1923 Antonin Artaud, stage and film actor, then twenty-seven years old, sent a selection of his poetry to Jacques Rivière, editor-in-chief of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*. On 1st May he received a note from Rivière saying he was sorry he could not publish the poetry but would like to make the poet's acquaintance. And so they met.

The very day they met Artaud wrote Rivière a letter which has been frequently quoted but rarely given serious attention:

> I suffer from a fearful mental disease. My ideas abandon me at every stage, from the mere fact of thought itself to the exterior phenomenon of its materialisation in words. Words, the forms of sentences, inner directions of thought, the mind's simplest reactions: I am in constant pursuit of my intellectual being. When I can seize a form, even if it is imperfect, I fix it for fear of losing the whole idea. I live beneath myself, I know, and I suffer from it, but I accept it for fear of dying completely. Those forms of expression, those infelicitous turns of phrase for which you reproach me come from the deep uncertainty of my ideas... [I am] happy indeed when this uncertainty does not give way to the absolute non-existence from which I sometimes suffer. I should like you to understand that it is not a question of greater or lesser existence resulting from what is commonly called "inspiration," but of a total absence, a real void... the few things I sent you are fragments I was able to conquer from complete nothingness.

Later, replying to a letter in which Rivière had tried to reassure and encourage him, Artaud again explained:

> The diffusiveness of my poetry, the defects of form, this constant failing of my mind are not to be attributed to a lack of practice or of mastery of the instrument I handled—but to a collapse of the soul at its centre, a kind of erosion of ideas that is both essential and fugitive. There is something that destroys my thinking, something that prevents me from being what I could be, but that leaves me, as it were, in suspense....

Let us not speak about the man's madness, for it would be too easy. Let us speak about the man tormented by an obscure malady who is conscious of living "beneath himself," who knows that the defects of his poetry are not superficial but come from "a fearful mental disease," from "a collapse of the soul at its centre," the man who is nevertheless absolutely determined to be published by the *Nouvelle Revue Française* (the most rigorous literary periodical in France), determined to be a *littérateur*. This is already clear in his concern with the question of whether "a defective poem with flashes of true beauty has less authentic literary value and less genuine power than a perfect poem without inner resonance...."

We have before us a human crisis transformed into a literary problem, with the victim himself reducing his plight to the banal question of whether a piece of writing perfect in form but weak in substance is preferable to an imperfect work that has "flashes of true beauty."

What is significant here is not the painful weakness of Artaud's position, which comes from his illness, but the ambiguity created by his falling under the spell of literature. This ambiguity pervaded his entire life; and his legitimate and illegitimate heirs, including those who have discovered a guide to the theatre of the future in his writings, are still victims of this ambiguity.

ALTHOUGH RIVIÈRE ANSWERED Artaud's earnest questioning with great kindness and understanding, he spoke as a man of letters, not as a physician or a sage.

> In itself the mind is a sort of cancer [Rivière wrote] spreading and constantly growing in all directions.... There is a whole literature... which is the product of the immediate, and, so to speak, animal operation of the mind. This literature has the appearance of a great plain of ruins; the columns still standing are supported by chance alone. It is chance that reigns there and a sort of dreary multiplicity. One can say that it is the most precise and direct expression of the monster every man carries within himself,

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> but instinctively tries to bind in the twining weeds of fact and experience most of the time. "But," you will retort, "is this what one must describe as the fragility of the mind? While I complain of a weakness you paint another disease that probably comes from an excess of strength." Here is my opinion more precisely: the mind is fragile inasmuch as it needs obstacles. Without them it loses its way and destroys itself. It seems to me that this mental "erosion," these inner "harpies," this "destruction of the mind in its substance" are entirely due to the excessive freedom of your mind. To become taut the mind requires limitation, an encounter with the blessed opacity of experience. The only cure for madness is the innocence of facts.

At this point it is clear that Artaud's and Rivière's discussion becomes an exchange between deaf men. For while Artaud speaks in the first person of a real condition, the "fearful disease of [his] mind," Rivière answers as a *littérateur* concerned with the control of his medium, and proffers advice against giving the mind "too much freedom" to a man who suffers precisely from a lack of any control over his mind's "freedom."

However, it *is* Rivière the man of letters that Artaud is addressing, for he wants to be recognised as Artaud the writer. Now as an editor to an aspiring writer, Rivière is absolutely correct in observing that a literature which abandons itself to the "animal operation of the mind" can only be "a great plain of ruins" ruled by "chance and a sort of dreary multiplicity." But in doing so he remains fatally deaf to Artaud's cry, which is not simply the appeal of an aspiring writer but the call of a human being in distress.

Furthermore, Rivière overlooked an essential fact. In the republic of letters within which he was an eminent judge, a law had been in force, ever since the time of Rimbaud, which held that every product of the mind, no matter how "animal" or "unleashed" (the more so the better), is meaningful and important in itself. His objections to Artaud, then, were really a matter of form, not substance. And Artaud was right in pointing this out to him, and to claim for his faltering but humanly authentic writings the same recognition given works that are, perhaps, more controlled but less "true." Artaud was right, but that does not make his writing any better, nor does it save him from the equivocation in which he has been caught by his literary ambition. The equivocation is not formal but substantial: existential in the fullest sense of the term.

ARTAUD felt that writing and achieving recognition as a writer were the sole means he had of struggling against the menace of "the collapse of the soul at its centre." He struggled against it by expressing it totally, letting it do all the havoc it could, and making it the distinctive feature of his personality. One is led to say that in contemporary society the only way of asserting one's full individuality without restriction is to achieve success as an artist. Since Artaud could not make his mark in the republic of letters as a master of form, he was driven to push to the limit what Rivière termed the "animal operation of the mind," venturing in all possible directions until he reached the very boundaries of the meaningless. Given his condition, the fatal result was that the disease corroding his mind was purposely aggravated. By putting his illness at the service of his pen he was forced to enter a closed circuit where mental turmoil produced verbal turmoil which, in turn, augmented mental turmoil every time the current was turned on.

In short, by falling under the spell of literature, by becoming involved in the question of literary form (and its negation, a no less literary problem) Artaud betrayed himself and the truth he carried within him. Artaud's human situation was an absolute one. It defied expression, and the only solution it permitted was, perhaps, a religious one, a passage to another order of reality. It was this that he frenziedly searched for all his life through writing. But obviously writing could not lead him there.

In what tortuous straits Artaud found himself is revealed with painful clarity in the letter he wrote (20 May 1924) to Jacques Rivière, who had suggested the publication of their correspondence under assumed names. "Why lie," Artaud begins by protesting, "why try to place on a literary plane something that is the cry of life itself? Why give an appearance of fiction to something made of the ineradicable substance of the soul?" However, his desire to see his writings in print evidently is too strong for him, and he adds: "Yes, but on condition that the reader is not given the impression of perusing a work that has been fabricated.... The reader must believe in a *real* illness and not in a *mal du siècle*."

It seems to me that the wish to have a role in the literary world has rarely been expressed so ingenuously. After all, in order to "give the impression," to "make the reader believe" one must work artfully, that is, pretend, lie, and "place on a literary plane" something that is "the cry of life itself." There is no other way. You cannot make really public a true illness and real suffering without simulation. Shown to the public, one's inner life always seems simulated—or rather, only to the degree that it is well feigned does it not seem so.

Driven by the ambition to have a unique and privileged position in the world of letters,

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Artaud strained his ideas and his spiritual life to their wildest pitch. By making them the theme of a theatrical fiction he consciously aggravated his malady. Aggravating it and simulating it he became more and more its prisoner.

How BREAK THE vicious circle? Artaud tried to do it by prophetic outcries and by frantic abandon to the spasms of his malady; he publicly exhibited himself exactly as he was. *"Antonin Artaud Acts Himself"* is the title someone gave to his last public appearance, on 13 January 1947, and it is described with both compassion and objectivity in André Gide's diary. No one witnessing such a performance could have considered it a fiction, like certain public manifestations of the Futurists, Dadaists and Surrealists. Artaud's performance was made up of genuinely disconnected and incongruous gestures, painful grimaces and inarticulate cries. The proof of its reality was supposed to reside in the fact that all those unrelated and squalid signs were absolutely undecipherable, remaining, as they did, beyond the range of communication. What he exhibited in public was a real illness; a fact that was unintelligible, painful, cut off from the world.

Artaud's effort to represent his own human plight outside the frame of any pre-established order and "mental point of reference" (his own words) ended in an impasse. It resulted in total and constant confusion between literary artifice and individual truth, theatrical fiction and real existence. "All I have done is to transcribe the pain of an abortive adjustment," Artaud wrote. And these words could well serve as the epigraph for his life as well as for his work.

THE OBSERVATIONS and proclamations contained in *Le Théâtre et son Double* reveal Artaud's ambiguity in a less frenzied form than the contents of *Il Faut en Finir avec le Jugement de Dieu* and *Les Lettres de Rodez*. On the one hand Artaud spoke of the theatre from the point of view of the professional he was and wanted to be. On the other, he spoke of it as a private form of expression he had dreamed up, a medium that could save him from the abstractness and inanity of writing by permitting him to incarnate fully and publicly the only character he really cared about and that continually escaped him—himself.

If one does not keep in mind the ambiguity and impotence that pervaded Artaud's personality, then his ideas on the theatre, or rather his insights and prophetic utterances, break up into congeries of confused and contradictory suggestions.

THOSE WHO HAVE rallied to the call of "the Theatre of Cruelty" with the illusion that the more they simplified the notion the more revolutionary it became, have failed to consider the significance of a great number of Artaud's declarations and the meaning of the title he gave to his collected writings on the theatre: *Le Théâtre et son Double*.

The literal meaning of *"double"* is "an immaterial body that reproduces the image of a person." It is a term used in sorcery. In Artaud's letter to Jean Paulhan informing him of the title he had chosen for the book, Artaud explained:

> While the theatre "doubles" life, life "doubles" the true theatre, which has nothing to do with Oscar Wilde's ideas on the subject. The title refers to all the "doubles" of the theatre I think I have found in these last years: metaphysics, the plague and cruelty.

So the "double" of the theatre, *i.e.*, its origin and ultimate cause, is not life, which, fascinated by its reflection in art, imitates art (as Wilde suggested). It is rather the incorporeal or transcendent essence of existence and its ultimate meaning. In the theatre it takes on a body, fills a space, and receives the gift of expressive gesture and of speech, while in real life it remains completely obscure and dispersed.

"Art is not the imitation of life. Life is the imitation of a transcendent principle with which art restores communication." So we are out of the realm of naturalism, realism, or any ideology. As a matter of fact, we are in the midst of what I shall call, for lack of a more precise term, Artaud's "gnosticism"—his bottomless pessimism about the nature of the real world and his hatred of it, as a place of shadows and evil: which can be redeemed only by the effort of creation, the act of incarnating and personifying physically: for creation is a drive towards the light and the good. But it can never redeem completely. For in order to incarnate and personify, the creative act must accept matter, which is the principle of evil, and the form of the world as it is.

"Life, since it admits extension, thickness, heaviness and matter admits, as a direct consequence, evil and all that is inherent in evil and matter," Artaud writes. In a letter to Jean Paulhan explaining the meaning he attaches to the word "cruelty" as applied to the theatre, he adds:

> I employ the word "cruelty" in the sense of . . . a cosmic rigour and implacable necessity, in the gnostic sense of a living whirlwind that devours darkness. . . . Good is desired, it is the consequence of an act. Evil is permanent. When the hidden god creates, he obeys the cruel necessity of creation which has been imposed on himself by himself; and he cannot *not* create, hence not admit into the centre of the self-willed whirl-

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> wind a kernel of evil ever more condensed and ever more consumed.... A play in which there was not this will, this blind appetite for life capable of overriding everything, would be a useless and unfulfilled play.

Here we have an example of the intrinsic ambiguity of Artaud's ideas. He posits a creation that, while gravitating towards the good (and the light), cannot avoid "admitting" a "kernel of evil" which, however, "is ever more consumed." In the next breath this voluntary, conscious creation, gravitating towards the good and the light, becomes "a blind appetite for life capable of overriding everything." Now, these two ideas obviously cancel each other, on aesthetic as well as logical grounds. Still, the tension in which they co-exist helps to clarify not only the meaning of each, but the relation between them. (It seems to me that on the whole it is the first of the two conceptions Artaud tends to stress; but the question is not important for the purpose of this essay.)

Artaud's "gnosticism" was the source of the apocalyptic horror he had of the endless proliferation in the modern world of *l'homme moyen sensuel* and his ideals. "We are enveloped," he writes, in a revealing passage,

> by a phantom humanity which is evil and malignant. It takes root in the bodies of ordinary men who at certain moments reveal themselves to be vampires and begin to act like them. These are the men who at birth did not kill the beast in themselves and who have refused to separate themselves from the beast which enslaved them. This beast is a bottomless eroticism, the lugubrious light of an eroticism coming from the farthest reaches of the world.... It is there that one sees the horrible world of lubricity glittering.

This is by no means the most violent expression of Artaud's disgust with everything material, animal, or sexual. But it should be enough to enlighten those who interpret his idea of "cruelty" as an exhibition of eroticism and sadism. His horror of that "phantom humanity which is evil and malignant" leads directly to his conviction that, since the French theatre has been an expression of this type of humanity from the 17th century on, French drama has been nothing more than "story-telling psychology," with the result that "actors in France no longer know how to do anything but talk."

"The misdeeds of the psychological theatre descended from Racine," Artaud asserts at the beginning of his essay "On the Theatre and Cruelty,"

> have unaccustomed us to that immediate and violent action which the theatre should possess. Movies, in their turn, murdering us with second-hand reproductions which, filtered through machines, cannot *unite with* our sensibility, have maintained us for ten years in an ineffectual torpor in which our faculties appear to be foundering.

This seems to take us back to what I would call the primitive conception of theatre. Indeed, leaving Artaud's violence aside, how can we disagree with his idea that "the stage is a concrete physical place which asks to be filled"? In point of fact, the notion was not new even at the time Artaud affirmed it. The great Russian directors—particularly Meyerhold who, in 1930, had brought his theatre to Paris, where Artaud must certainly at least have heard of it—had made it the fundamental precept of staging. Moreover, the principle that, in the theatre, speech must be a function of an action is obvious enough.

When Artaud declares that the cinema is the enemy of the theatre because, instead of giving cohesion to our naturally dispersive sensibility it makes it "founder in an ineffectual torpor," he seems to invoke a theatre that is the very opposite of the cinema: a theatre based on the direct and rigorous communication of the meaning of human actions, rather than on their physical appearance. But it is clear that Artaud also had in mind a theatre based on violence, sounds and gesture whose only superiority to the cinema was that the gestures, sounds, and lights were not merely reproduced but physically present. Here he seems to be describing the spectacular theatre envisaged by contemporary directors like Meyerhold.

We must not forget, however, that Artaud meant more than that. For he invoked a theatre that "did not limit itself to showing intimate scenes from the lives of a few puppets, transforming the audience into Peeping Toms" but one that put the audience face to face with the fact that "everything that exists is cruelty." He went on to assert that "it is upon this idea of extreme action pushed beyond all limits that the theatre must be rebuilt.... This cruelty will be bloody, if necessary."

From all of which one might conclude that Artaud seriously advocated the presentation of monstrous events on the stage. But he suddenly veered again and gave "cruelty" a purely figurative sense, identifying it with "a severe moral purity which is not afraid to pay life the price it must be paid." It is obvious that the only possible connection between bloody "cruelty" and "severe moral purity" is metaphorical. One must not forget the deliberately extreme and often maniacal language he used. As a matter of fact, Artaud (in a letter to Jean Paulhan)

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made an attempt to soften the meaning of the "cruelty" to which he was so attached.

> It is not a question of brandishing the butcher's knife every minute but of re-introducing in each theatrical gesture the notion of a kind of cosmic cruelty without which there would be neither life nor reality.

"Cosmic cruelty" is obviously connected with what I have called Artaud's gnosticism: his idea that since we are cast into a world of shadow and evil, since we strive to rise towards the light, and since we can act and create only in the world as it is, we are forced to collide with the laws of the body, matter, and evil, *i.e.*, with "cruelty." And, if the theatre is to tell the truth, *this* is the fact, he feels, that should be represented.

It seems to me that the most authentic and most penetrating of Artaud's insights is the idea that the Theatre, like the Plague in ancient chronicles, is a ruthless revelation of the ultimate reality of existence, for it lays bare the true nature of the individual and the world in which he finds himself, thus causing the disintegration of social conventions. "Like the plague, the theatre is a formidable call to the forces that impel the mind by example to the source of its conflicts. . . ." And this statement is followed by a reference to the mysteries of Eleusis, which is connected with his assertion that

> the theatre is, first of all, ritual and magic, tied to forces, and founded on a religion and on affective beliefs whose efficacy manifests itself in gestures, and is *directly* linked to the rites of the theatre which are actually the exercise and expression of a spiritual need for magic.

HERE WE HAVE not only the time-worn confusion of theatre with religious rite, but its confusion with magic and primitive myth. Yet we cannot deny that underlying all this was Artaud's serious idea of restoring to the theatre its original and primary function: the public commemoration and celebration of the essential aspects of human destiny. It seems to me that he is calling us back to the same springs from which came the images of Oedipus' revelation and Macbeth's delirium, as well as Ibsen's passion for truth, Strindberg's obsessions, and Pirandello's vehement ratiocination. Furthermore, I find it quite arbitrary (even though seemingly justified by some of Artaud's declarations) to interpret his ideas as a prescription for "Happenings," dramatic improvisation, or the staging of violence. For in such spectacles anguish, which is so real for Artaud, becomes either an aesthetic object or a pretext for the unlikely—a far cry from the ideal theatre where "one stakes one's life."

MY REMARKS should not be construed as a defence of the inert traditionalism of much of present-day Western theatre, but as an attempt to treat with the seriousness it deserves Artaud's emphasis on the theatre's essentially spiritual effect. (One might even speak in terms of "purification" or of the old, misunderstood catharsis.) "The theatre must become a kind of experimental demonstration of the profound unity of the abstract and the concrete." Now it is clear that such a demonstration cannot be conducted in a universe of gesture, scream, and fearful action. It can only be carried through on the level of the intellect, even if the means used is physical action.

There is a passage in Artaud that seems to me particularly pertinent. He is writing of the leap required to pass from real action (which is utilitarian and violent) to theatrical action (whose meaning lies precisely in its being gratuitous, made for contemplation and purely symbolic). In his essay "The Theatre and the Plague," he says:

> An actor requires infinitely more power to keep from committing a crime than a murderer needs courage to complete his act. It is here, in its very gratuitousness, that the action and the effect of a feeling in the theatre appears infinitely more valid than that of a feeling fulfilled in life. Compared with the murderer's fury which exhausts itself, that of the tragic actor remains enclosed within a perfect circle. The murderer's fury accomplishes an act, discharges itself, and loses contact with the force that inspired but can no longer sustain it.

The actor's fury, however, Artaud points out, remains in contact with the nature of the world that inspired it.

The same idea is expressed in another essay. "Though a theatrical gesture is violent, it is disinterested. The theatre teaches precisely the uselessness of the action which, once done, is over, and the superior utility of the state of soul not consumed by an act, and which, reviewed, achieves a purification."

Yet we can find statements in Artaud's writings that completely contradict these passages, and that really seem to call for a theatre based on gesture, spectacular violence, and frenzy. But here we must pause, and recall once again Artaud's point of departure and the direction he followed all his life. In the first place, he rejected realism root and branch. "To the crude visualisation of what is," he said, "the theatre opposes images of what is not." Of course one might retort that this has always been the function of art. But Artaud's attitude requires elucidation. He refused to grant that contemporary "average men" and their empty, opaque existences had any reality.

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> "Today we have reached the point of *applied life*," he declared, "in which everything has disappeared—nature, images and strength. We have reached a state of stagnation in which man lives on what he has inherited, with a reserve of feelings and moral attitudes that have not changed for the last century.

THIS IS THE SITUATION that he felt must be undermined and destroyed. According to Artaud, realism both in life and in the theatre was an essentially conservative force. He rebelled against modern man's pride in the realism of pragmatic thought and rejected all the ideologies that had fed Western society since the 17th century. In this world of utilitarian realism man is conceived of as a series of psychological reactions to be adjusted to the objective social situation and its practical goals whatever they are. For Artaud, man belongs at the opposite pole, in the realm of abandoned freedom.

> We do not permit the obstruction of the free development of a delirium which is as legitimate and as logical as any other succession of human ideas and acts. The repression of anti-social reactions is as chimerical as it is unacceptable in principle. All individual acts are anti-social. Madmen are, by definition, the individual victims of social dictatorship. In the name of this individuality which is peculiar to man, we demand that these slaves of sensibility be freed.

This was written during the brief period Artaud spent in the ranks of the Surrealists. And with the passing of time he became more and more violent; for example, he accused modern medicine, particularly psychiatry, of trying to "rob man of his ego," and of "claiming the singular right to dictate the duties of each individual's conscience."

I BELIEVE this global revolt explains Artaud's passage from the notion of the theatre as "a call to the forces that impel the mind by example to the source of its conflicts" to the extreme idea of a theatre that "will no longer be based on dialogue; and dialogue, itself, the little that remains, will not be written out and fixed *a priori* but will be put on the stage, created on the stage...." Moreover, he asserts that the theatre will be restored to itself only on the day when every dramatic representation evolves directly on the stage and is not a chewing over of a definitive, self-sufficient, written text.

And we must not forget his declaration that "the theatre, like the plague, takes gestures and pushes them as far as possible." Such observations are generally regarded as arguments for the idea of a theatre as total spectacle—a dramatic art form where gesture, movement, and sudden incongruous "happenings" are violently stressed at the expense of the text and the coherent development of the action. It is probable that the insights of Artaud we choose to consider the most original and most personal ones are those, like the above, where he strains his basic intuitions to the breaking point and reduces them to absurdity.

But, aside from the fact that elsewhere in his works more convincing and more penetrating reflections totally contradict the thesis of "total theatre," we cannot accept it for other reasons. We know from his own utterances that Artaud's concern was not with staging, but with the meaning and essential function of the drama. Moreover, the man who said "the spiritual infirmity of the West [can be seen in] man's confusing art with aestheticism" could not really be an aesthete, and could not seriously attach great importance to aesthetic, *i.e.*, purely spectacular, stage effects.

In truth, if we assume that Artaud's thinking is exclusively concerned with a theory of stage direction we are forced to conclude that the theory is self-contradictory on the basis of his own writings. For it is based on two antithetical principles: (*1*) the substitution of the *mise en scène* for articulated language, and (*2*) the use of articulated language as a "means of expressing the *mise en scène*," *i.e.*, to make it "express what it generally does not express ... *poetry*." It seems to me that this is trying to square the circle.

When Artaud attempted to clarify the meaning of his strictures against the emphasis on the text, he said, for example, "It is not a question of suppressing spoken language but of giving words the importance they have in dreams." This may be full of suggestions but what does it mean to give words uttered on the stage the importance they have in dreams? It implies either a recitation of senseless phrases in somnambulistic attitudes, or the opposite: a stylised, lyrical performance with words sounding as if they were dreamed, only because they take on a surrealistic quality entirely different from their value in ordinary discourse. As a matter of fact, it would be a return to a noble style of recitation somewhat similar to Arnold Schoenberg's *Sprechgesang*. In that case, however, the words must be selected meticulously, *not* improvised.

IF IT IS CONCRETE suggestions for staging one is seeking in Artaud one should examine the sections where he discusses the "*objective* unforeseen"—"the unforeseen, not in situations but in things, the abrupt untimely transition from an intellectual image to a true image; *e.g.*, the man who is blaspheming sees suddenly and

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realistically materialised the image of his blasphemy"—"or the sudden appearance of a fabricated Being made of wood and cloth entirely invented, corresponding to nothing yet disquieting by nature. . . ."

Excellent illustrations of successful use of the "*objective* unforeseen" are, it seems to me, Pozzo and Lucky in Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* and Ionesco's creature in *Amédée* which grows and grows until it overflows space. It is likely that these dramatists were influenced by Artaud, although we cannot be certain of it. In any case, ideas like these were in the air even before the experiments of the Surrealists. Moreover, Etienne Décroux's ideas about the use of pantomime and stylised, violent gesticulation were propounded as early as 1931. The young Jean-Louis Barrault, Artaud's friend and admirer, had gone to Décroux's school and, at the same time, had carefully studied Artaud's theories.

OF COURSE, when Artaud called for the suppression of the spoken word he was, as usual, pushing his ideas to extremes. He did not mean all he said, and immediately corrected or modified his position. But even if the devices identified with him can be considered relative innovations ("relative," for they were already known in Russia and Germany, if not in France), it is hard to see the connection between the use of pantomime and Artaud's vision of a theatre which, freed from the chains of the average man's psychology and the bonds of realism, was to restore a sense of "moral danger" to the audience. If pantomime is made the most important theatrical element, the theatre once again becomes all surface. The "aesthetic" factor, which Artaud genuinely disparaged, is accentuated. How, then, is his primary aim, the spiritual turmoil of the spectator, advanced?—unless the "butcher's knife" is brandished, in which case we have a circus act, not pantomime. . . .

Be that as it may, pantomime does not lead us to the "metaphysical" theatre of rigorous moral purity envisaged in *Le Théâtre et son Double*. What, then, is the most coherent and comprehensive interpretation we can give to Artaud's miscellany of ideas on the theatre? Can a clue to the underlying principle be found in the statement that the theatre of the future should speak "a unique language half-way between the idea and the word"?

It is certainly the kind of phrase that appeals to modern sensibility, continually oscillating, as it does, between image and word—between the black magic of the pure sign, a simple fleeting mark made by real movements, and the fascination of the evocative, symbolic, rhythmic words of coherent discourse. But it is a phrase that has no real application, except to the cinema and to the dance styles of contemporary adolescents.

After all, if Artaud's message is simply that a theatre of immediate "sensation" is closer to us than dramas based on the inevitable, logical development of a human action that conflicts and interacts with other human actions, then it amounts to nothing more than a facile denunciation of conventional drama, which is already in its death throes, if not completely dead.

What can we finally say, then, about Artaud?

First of all, I think we must recognise the fact that his idea of the theatre is not merely ambiguous but self-contradictory to the point of schizophrenia. On the one hand, his theatre must strive for spiritual intensity and the purity of poetry. On the other, it must cling furiously to the corporeal, to the actual presence, to the brutal and exterior effect. If we separate these two drives we reduce each of them to a series of banal propositions. It seems to me that the source of their significance and evocative power is the spasmodic tension between them and the irresolute immobility resulting from it. Otherwise, one is tempted to send Artaud's admirers back to a book published about a century ago: Friedrich Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, where the two conflicting principles are defined with considerably greater clarity.

Roger Blin, a man of the theatre, Artaud's friend and (to some degree) his disciple, summed up his impressions of Artaud's work in these lines:

> A maximum of stylisation, a maximum of anti-naturalism, and not merely the rejection, but the destruction, of every canon of the bourgeois and classical theatre. That is Artaud's great value. . . . However, I was never persuaded by the application of these principles, by the stress on brutality, cruelty, screaming. . . . For Artaud the stage is a space to be filled with gestures, not with words because words exert a tyranny. In short, it seems to me that Artaud aimed at a surrealist theatre that never existed.

The theatre envisaged by Artaud's current discoverers is one that never existed and could only exist very artificially and very briefly.

As for Artaud himself, what he wanted was not just a theatre that never existed but one that *never could exist*: a place of palingenesis where Antonin Artaud could play his own role, clothe empty words in flesh and blood, and so redeem himself from the world of shadows which imprisoned him.

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NOTES & TOPICS

Strick's Ulysses

JOSEPH STRICK's *Ulysses* is intended as a homage to Joyce, and turns out to be as sincere and affectionate as one might have hoped for. Yet it remains something of a puzzle. What exactly did Strick respond to in the novel? What coherence and insights did he discover there? The film doesn't make this clear. It renders the story literally and so takes us back a stage in the process of creation; it might be based on some Ur-*Ulysses* written by Maupassant or by the author of *Dubliners*. Little is made of Joyce's aspiration to move beyond naturalism. For Joyce's Dublin has all the richness of his inner world, an abundant, glittering and protean vision created by a remarkable mind working at full stress. Strick's Dublin is the actual place. It could be any city, depressed and diffuse, awaiting the transforming powers of the imagination.

Even so, miraculously, Strick is able at moments to transcend this naturalistic *bric-à-brac*. The scenes in the Martello tower, the Dublin beaches bathed in light, the friendly squalor of the Bloom household, down to such details as Molly's memories of Gibraltar and Leopold's encounter with Gerty, establish with a wonderful exactness the texture and succulence of the original. The same appreciation underlies the casting. Milo O'Shea may be more dapper than Joyce's Bloom, but his characterisation is convincing, even during the most surreal acrobatics. Maurice Roëves, a good-looking ruminating sort of actor, may be nobody's idea of Stephen—which actor is?—but he is moving in his soliloquies and in a brief classroom scene. A re-reading of the novel finds T. P. McKenna irreplaceable as Buck Mulligan; while Barbara Jefford is wholly magnificent as Molly, plummy and tawdry, sensual and operatic. She has the power of intimacy: the bawdry comes over as a gentle love-play encouraging us to partnership.

But these real achievements leave unanswered the question of what in Strick's temperament drew him to film so supremely verbal an artifact as *Ulysses*.

He has always been a documentary maker, a film journalist with a penchant for the strong image and for a brutal and sometimes effective type of editing: his cuts are usually slashes. He has little sense of convention, little sensibility. At first sight he seems aloof from his material: it is seldom elaborated on or explored. He is obsessed with the manner in which people act out of their erotic fantasies (often perversions), yet he makes no claim to understand these people or, it appears, seek to understand them. But he is not impersonal or prudish or sanctimonious, nothing so subtle. He is just enraged. And his rage often drives him into incoherence. His first feature, *The Savage Eye*—a significant misnomer, since an eye cannot be savage—concerned Los Angeles. An immense brouhaha exploded on the screen: cars crashed violently, women convulsed before a faith-healer or wailed over dead dogs, transvestites shimmered and strippers stripped. Much significance was strained after, but the connecting story was trite and the images didn't add up to a clear statement. At times Strick became so inarticulate that all coolness of technique deserted him and his filming was as stilted as a family movie.

Passion in art may be something we need, but not in the form that Strick gives it to us. Yet he seems unable to steer wide of his obsessions. Otherwise, why should he have chosen Jean Genet's sly, feminine, baroque play, *The Balcony*, as his next subject? Strick tore through its delicate fabric like a police raid. His Nighttown sequence in *Ulysses* is similarly damaged. In Joyce's phantasmagoria the language takes on magic as it mimes the disorder of the senses; enchantment and horror surround the transformations. But Strick has no feeling for this dream world. He bares it down to creaking machinery and to brutish fact. Joyce's sirens become stolid moaning whores, and Bella astraddle Bloom is just a fat woman sitting with odd grace on a plumpish man. One worries for their inconvenience and for Strick's embarrassment. He seems to have learned nothing from the flagellation sequence in *8½*. Fellini may lean towards self-pity, but at least he is sufficiently in touch with his fantasy to be able to revive it fluently and richly on film.

Such poetry is beyond Strick. He is an excellent reporter, nothing more, who reports on *Ulysses* and *The Balcony* as he would on Los Angeles. He finds no visual equivalents for their verbal play. He seems unaware of their idiosyncratic substance, ripping them from their social context and personal rhythm. The stress is on urgency, impact, nowness. The action of *Ulysses* is re-dated to the vague present, which makes nonsense of its politics. The problem of anti-Semitism is certainly one of its major themes, but the quality of this anti-Semitism cannot be dissociated from the presence of British Rule in Ireland and from the nationalistic and religious difficulties of 1904. For instance, Mr. Deasy and Haines, the English schoolmaster

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and student, may be candid anti-Semites, but they are also full of contempt for the Irish and for all the under-privileged races. By showing these Imperialist dummies as contemporary figures, Strick gives his subject a paranoid cast.

And yet in spite of these many disadvantages, Strick's bulldozing has done us a service. His temerity in stripping this classic of much of its glamour forces us to think again about its value. For the brilliant surface of *Ulysses*, its dazzling virtuosity of technique and language, is liable to blind us to possible defects in its structure. Does *Ulysses* have a form, an emotional centre? Is it fully integrated, or are we supposed to see it as an open-ended self-evolving work that doesn't set out to fulfil these organic expectations? Its wit is indubitable: the parallel with the *Odyssey*, the leitmotifs, the verbal echoes that have delighted the exegetes. But the feeling beneath the wit is often sentimental in a way that suggests an incoherence of form at the deepest level. The admirable pastiches and parodies seem defensive at moments of intensity. Do the meetings of Leopold and Stephen have a real significance, or is there something evasive about Joyce's attempt to bring these two aspects of himself together? Isn't Molly too limited a character to represent Mother Earth in her final blooming or *fioritura*? Aren't the ironical and heroic elements of the novel at war with each other?

These are a layman's questions, and they call for an expert's answer.

Eric Rhode

Rousselot of the John Birch Society

Letter from California — By Herbert Gold

Before talking with John H. Rousselot at his headquarters in San Marino, California, I thought it might help me to understand this energiser and leader of the John Birch Society to meet some of his followers, organisers, and grass-roots workers in the local groups in San Francisco. I attended a meeting in the elegant house of a retired army colonel and real estate investor in San Francisco, going through the full evening of indoctrination lecture, films, cartoons, book reports, questions, coffee, cookies, and discussion. It was a long session which produced a numbing, agreeable fatigue, and perhaps a few quotations from my notes can suggest the intellectual tone of the gathering.

Colonel Dickson (*throwing his arms about me*): "You're a spy. I know you, you're a spy. That's all right, you're a nice spy and we'll convert you."

Mrs. Lenox: "Those Hell's Angels, everyone thought they were *bad*, but now it turns out they're good." (This was shortly after the Hell's Angels had attempted to break up a Peace in Viet Nam march and volunteered for service in Viet Nam as—their word—"gorillas.")

Mr. Merriam: "I read a book of yours once, didn't like it. No, that's right, I didn't actually read it, friend of mine read it. So I didn't read it."

Colonel Dickson (*pressing his face against mine*): "I sacrifice for my principles. Income tax, for example. The Commies in the State Department get the Reds in Internal Revenue to investigate my tax returns. But that's all right, we'll impeach 'em."

The Major Co-ordinator (*who gave the indoctrination lecture*): "World War III has begun.... We don't think there's anything *wrong* with civil rights, segregation, or integration. It's what's being *done* that causes trouble. The Commies want half of everything.... We get bombasted with criticism of how Mr. Welch called Eisenhower a conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy. Well, he didn't say that. He only said that was one of the possibilities, and it doesn't matter, just between you and I, because he did the same thing anyway—violating our very way of life."

Perhaps the best example of after-the-fact, therefore-caused-by the fact reasoning belonged to this Major Co-ordinator: "Since they founded the United Nations, there's been eighteen, no, twenty wars."

When I left the meeting, our host embraced me again. He told me he had always liked

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pretty girls, though he had never married, himself, personally. He showed me his library—copies of *Eros*, *New Yorker* cartoon albums, military history, and "rightist literature." He declared that I was the nicest spy he had ever met, and that he had no machine guns in the the house, and would I please print that. And also that he was an honest army officer who had made his money the American way, buying real estate during the Depression. I remembered the political scientist Richard Hofstadter's profile of the John Birchers: "a group enjoying a strong social position, mainly well-to-do and educated beyond the average, but manifesting a degree of prejudice and social tension not customarily found among the affluent and the educated."

My next step, after reading in *The Black Book*, the *Blue Book*, the *Impeach Earl Warren Packet*, the *Get the UN out of the US Packet*, and other educational background material, was the suburb of Los Angeles, where John Rousselot, National Director of Public Relations for the John Birch Society and Publisher of American Opinion Magazine, has his office. There he is busy organising the TACT ("Truth About Civil Turmoil") front groups, *Support Your Local Police* committees, and the *Impeach Earl Warren* and *Get Out of the UN* legions. Also he explains ideology to such staff lecturers as Leonard Patterson, an ex-Communist who is now the chief John Birch Negro, and guides the monthly magazine, *American Opinion*, whose circulation, he says, has reached 46,000. The Society itself has over 100,000 members, not counting fellow travellers. Last year it raised six million dollars for its various purposes—twice the amount collected by the Republican National Committee.

Mr. Rousselot seems to have the relationship to Robert Welch, founder of the Society, that Malcolm X had to Elijah Mohammed in the Black Muslim movement; that is, he is young, vital, energetic, presentable, deferent, and true to the Master without being slavish. He respects his leader but has his own contribution to make. He represents the vital and active growing head. While a Republican congressman, he courageously declared himself a member of the John Birch Society and read into the Congressional Record a statement of the "Beliefs and Principles of the John Birch Society." ("This God-given upward reach in the heart of man is a composite conscience to which we all must listen....") After Robert Welch, the Maestro himself, Mr. Rousselot is surely the more prominent figure in the Society, and Mr. Welch's heir-apparent.

When I talked with him by telephone, he displayed an impressive friendliness and eagerness to please. "Do you have transportation from the airport? Can we pick you up? Do you need a ride? Let me know and we'll come to get you."

I ARRIVED AT the John Birch Society offices under my own power, however. The low, grey-green building, a smalltowny, mainstreety structure, stands on Mission Street in San Marino, a comfortable middle-class growth on the land mass of Los Angeles. I entered through a bookshop filled with a variety of rightist literature, plus *Impeach Earl Warren* matches, SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL POLICE bumper stickers, and other educational materials. Typewriters clattered; ladies with radical-conservative Southern California style (blondined hair, costume jewellery, synthetic fibres), undismayed by age, attended to switchboards, stood at filing cases, sold books, magazines, charms, and showed visitors through the plant. In my idleness I began making up my own bumper stickers: CARESS YOUR LOCAL POLICE. While I waited, a young man came out of the rain, shaking his slicker, introduced himself as a member from the Tulsa chapter, and was shown the sights of the building. A receptionist was eating a Mounds bar, just like a centre, leftwing, business, medical, legal, federal, or any other kind of secretary. There was a reassuringly familiar feeling of an insurance agency office in Lakewood, Ohio, where I grew up. How can a memory of home threaten anyone?

John Rousselot greeted me at the door of his office. He is a boyish-looking man of 38 who moves with vigour despite a serious crippling of one leg. He is a practising Christian Scientist. A friend of his had told me: "He's a nice guy who has overcome his handicap. Many people would have been embittered against the whole human race." He made me comfortable while we discussed his personal history—married, three children, graduated from Principia College, a school in Elsah, Illinois, with Christian Science connections. His father, a chemist, is a manufacturer of specialised lacquers. Rousselot himself had early been "oriented toward Political Science and Journalism," and indeed, at an early age had practised both trades, first as a public relations counsellor with FHA in Washington, then with his own firm, and then, in 1960, as a Congressman from the 25th District of California. His central concern in Congress was with the dangers of Communism, and after his defeat in a bid for re-election, he immediately went to work full time for the John Birch Society.

He declared himself willing to spend two hours answering my questions and was clearly capable of fielding them with ease, usually say-

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ing just enough to be gracious but not enough to satiate any burning curiosity about what was going on inside his head. Occasionally his face creased in a chagrined grin, like that of a boy with his hand caught in the cookie jar. Who, *me*? he seemed to ask about the threat of war. I'm nice, I want peace.

How was he led to the John Birch Society? In Washington he became aware of security problems. He met FBI men. He read J. Edgar Hoover's book, *Masters of Deceit*. He discovered that less than 5% of government workers are Marxists, but many, many more are their willing tools. In Congress he identified no Communist agents, but found about ten Marxists. "Anyway, government is inevitably an enemy of freedom."

Does he have further political hopes for himself? "Not in New York City." A sweet smile. "But goo'ness, we're better understood now." This led us to discuss the Minutemen, an organisation of armed militia which wants to fight back with machine guns and rehearses in uniform in the desert. Mr. Rousselot explained the difference between them and the John Birch Society. "For example, they believe it's all over. The Communists have taken over. They want to organise to fight back. Gosh, we disagree. We terminated their memberships. Goo'ness, they are warped as to the necessary methods." He repeated that the Society is only an educational and activist group. There are no uniforms.

When I felt any touchiness in the air, I asked Mr. Rousselot about his personal life and always received a reassuring response. "I like sports—golf. Played three times during my vacation. I like the three major sports: baseball, football, basketball. I like musicals. When I go to New York. I like music in general; for example, my secretary is a pianist. Concerts. Gosh, camping, too. With my family. The Republican Central Committee is sort of a hobby, too. I like to read history, politics. No, I haven't read *The Age of Jackson*, no, not that one. I liked it when Ike showed us freshmen congressmen through Gettysburg—he was sort of like chief guide. I like travel, never been to Europe." Would he like to visit the USSR? "I'd like to travel any place."

Back to business. He has three assistant public relations managers—in Chicago, Dallas, and White Plains, New York. He has a large staff here in San Marino and an office for Mr. Welch when he's in town. How many on his staff? Goo'ness, large and growing, doing fine.

What are the immediate goals of the Society? "Viet Nam. Win the war." The Supreme Court? "Gosh, if you can't ask a Communist to register—" What direction is the country going? "There's a Marxist drift." But as always, Mr. Rousselot speaks with a moderate voice: "This is not a crisis stage. They're clever at getting others to do the work. Ike is more a politician than—well, you know."

And so we seized the popular question about whether or not General Eisenhower was a "conscious agent of the Communist conspiracy." Moderately Mr. Rousselot pointed out that this is only one possibility; it was possible that he was not conscious. "Remember," he said, "he was a politician." He held up a copy of the book, *The Politician*. "Mr. Welch also believes that Milton Eisenhower is a clandestine agent of the Communist conspiracy. Gosh, I don't believe this. I believe that Milton is a great influence on his brother. He is a dedicated socialist, of course."

Viet Nam? "We can't have a true negotiated peace without guarantees from China and Russia—Peking, Moscow. I am in favour of withdrawing recognition of Russia until they bring back free elections, freedom, tours by the American press, religion. Economic pressure. Moral stand. Gosh, even their fishing vessels are conspiratorial—radar. There's a criminal element in charge there."

The American peaceniks? "There's merit in the suggestion to declare war on Viet Nam. Goo'ness, it's wrong to do it without declaring. Trouble is, we're not allowing military decisions to be made by qualified military personnel. Let's declare war. Go to win. Then, like in Japan and the Philippines, we can set up representative government."

The peace marchers led us naturally to the subject of education. Mr. Rousselot believes that the University of California is too big and unwieldy. "Perfectly possible that everyone shouldn't have a liberal arts education," he declared. "Gosh, why don't we direct people toward trade school?" He is in favour of further "tax considerations" to private schools. He is pleased that his own children are learning Latin and Greek and are not victims of the Dictionary of American Slang, which caused a scandal when found in some school libraries. "It's got some funny words," he said, smiling and shaking his head. "And the curriculum is too loose."

He is in favour of a "philosophical level" of opposing Communism. When I asked him to name a philosopher, he paused and then suggested: "Von Mies?" He is worried about the education establishment in this country. "The Peace Corps is an extension of socialism because it is controlled by colleges," he has stated.

Probably the freshest remarks he made concerned the problems of dealing with a highly industrialised, densely populated modern society. He is determined to bring back the traditional

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virtues of hard work and integrity and fear of God, but a linked problem such as that of the riots in Watts and the crisis of mass unemployment causes him some worry. "Part of the problem in Watts," he said, "was disrespect for law. Train the Negroes in respect for law and order, parents, property—respect for the family unit and school—church leaders. Now I know a Negro man who set up a bank for Negroes—that's initiative. Another man started a chain of grocery stores. Goo'ness, why don't they open up employment agencies? I told Louis Lomax I'd put up half the money for one. What is this unwarranted agitation from people like Bayard Rustin, over a hundred Communist front organisations, and Martin Luther King?"

I suggested that the agitation was linked to a discontent with poverty.

"Well, let's get them jobs—an employment agency—private."

Except for these moments of irritation with the bad behaviour of some Negroes, Mr. Rousselot held throughout our talk to a tone of calm understanding. On other occasions he has written firmly:

> Get the United States out of the United Nations, and the United Nations out of the United States. ... This is a Republic, not a democracy; let's keep it that way.... We want a restoration of a government of laws, and not of men; and if a few impeachments are necessary to bring that about, then we are all for the impeachments. (These quotations are from his remarks in the *Congressional Record*.)

However, in his present position as chief civiliser for the Society, he retreats a bit from the prophetic exhortation and speaks confidingly, cajolingly, with shrugs, goo'nesses, and goshes. He wants to be liked, he wants the John Birch Society to be liked. It is easy to grant him the first desire. The other one is still a problem in our cautious time when the John Birch Society is somehow linked with extremist ideas.

I LEFT THIS pleasant, well-spoken, responsible man with a nagging sense that some of my questions had not been fully answered. When he urged that we force the Soviet Union to hold free elections, bring back private enterprise, and believe in God, he would very quickly add, "But goo'ness, we can't ask them to be just like us." He repeatedly stated that he is opposed to war. It was hard, in this comfortable small office building, with tufted furniture and ladies working typewriters, in this hometowny suburb of San Marino, to believe in the John Birch Society as a collection of bloodthirsty fanatics. On the wall behind Mr. Rousselot's desk there are pictures of his family, the flag, and various anti-Communist awards and plaques. He stood up with his sweet, accommodating smile as I read the inscriptions. "These aren't so many trophies," he said modestly.

I have suggested a comparison between Malcolm X and John Rousselot. Both followed aging grand maestros, Mohammed and Robert Welch. Both subscribe to a mystic, absolutist view of reality, seeing black and white distinctions between the good guys and bad ones. Both take a civilising stance within the structure of the faith, presenting the best possible view of themselves and of their credo. The most apparent difference in character is that Malcolm was led to his stand by an anguished history and a terrible need both for revenge and to redeem himself. John H. Rousselot seems to have drifted on a course set out early in life—an ambitious smalltown boy who fulfils his youthful ambition within the framework of a simplistic distortion of the sense of American history. His opinions and his career come nicely together; he is not an alien in Southern California or America; he can be pleased by the coherence of his life.

But I may be overestimating the security of his place in the John Birch Society. His sweet indifference to my opinions and his generous affability in answering questions may involve more effort than appears on the surface. When I left, and he handed me my copy of "*The Biography of John H. Rousselot*," a mimeographed sheet of paper, the last glimpse I had of him was of the abrupt shutting-off of two hours of smiling ease. It was as if the stage lighting had suddenly changed.

Outside there was a winter storm with houses sliding into ravines, mud drifting into kitchens, automobiles tumbling on to high tension wires. This rich and sunny land had suffered one of its abrupt changes of fortune; it was being declared a disaster area. The threat of mud and wash had replaced the threat of fire and smog. All over California people were talking about what to do about their peculiarly attractive and difficult stretch of God's earth. The primitive sins and virtues were being ritually evoked, but it was not clear how they could solve the problems of San Marino, much less of the United States, South-east Asia, Europe, and the world.

John Rousselot looked fretfully after me as I opened the door and hurried out into the weather. He wanted to be happy. He wanted to be liked. Across his face passed a look of despair and misery, as if he knew that I, like so many other Americans, might not be his true friend.

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International Commentary

Has Gaullism a Future?

By Anthony Hartley

IT IS generally agreed that, during the 1960s, the face of international affairs has changed out of all recognition. For the confrontation of two apparently monolithic world blocs, which faced each other from 1945 onwards, has been substituted a much looser system in which lessening world tension has allowed rifts to appear within alliances without the risk of disaster. National interest has openly begun to supersede ideological orientation as the main motivating force of states engaged in international politics. But if the Russo-Chinese quarrel and the growth of national Communism in Eastern Europe has played no small part in bringing about what is usually called "polycentrism," in the West an equivalent (if less dramatic) part has been taken by President de Gaulle, and the '60s might well be called "The Decade of Gaullism." It was only from 1962 onwards that France's freedom from the Algerian morass allowed the full effect of the General's return to power to be felt. Indeed, it was only with the French veto on British entry into the European Economic Community (EEC) in January 1963 that the possible consequence of Gaullist policies really appeared in the light of day. Before then they were hardly taken seriously enough either in Washington or in London. As late as April 1961, at the time of the Challe *putsch* in Algeria, President Kennedy could commit what seems in retrospect the extraordinary blunder of offering the use of the American Sixth Fleet to oppose a rebel attempt to land in France—an example of sensational misunderstanding of the General's probable reaction to foreign intervention in a French civil war. Since then the State Department has learned to take more notice of Gaullist susceptibilities, and Mr. Wilson has shared (with Mr. Macmillan) the unpleasant experience of a de Gaulle press conference.

But if the '60s have seen Gaullism play a seemingly decisive role in breaking up international patterns that had appeared to be firmly established and in halting trends in European politics which most observers had taken to be irreversible, is it certain or even probable that the '70s will see it survive in any recognisable form? Has Gaullism a wider application to world affairs, or is it simply a version of French nationalism presented in the inimitable style of its founder? And if it does have a wider significance, what effect is it now having on the style of European politics? Is it pure paradox to talk of "British Gaullism" or "German Gaullism"?

TO ANSWER SUCH QUESTIONS it is first necessary to decide what Gaullism is in terms of international affairs and then to discuss what lasting repercussions it may have on the politics of other countries and on relations between states—especially in Western Europe. Within France itself President de Gaulle stands in a familiar line of descent. His is a unifying nationalism which appeals both to Left and Right, embracing the traditions of Jacobinism and the *ancien régime*. The historical parallel is Bonapartism, but a Bonapartism which has dispensed with the whiff of grape-shot and replaced the panache of the First Empire by the economic progress of the Second with its appeal to the *notables* and *grands commis* who have succeeded the officers and secret agents of war-time Gaullism. In the field of foreign affairs Gaullism is rather more complex. Under the Fifth Republic, French policy abroad has been dictated by a view of history and executed in a style, both of which are highly idiosyncratic.

In all President de Gaulle's writings and speeches on international affairs it is taken for granted that the Nation-State is the basic unit with which statesmen have to deal and to which alone the allegiance of the citizen can be given. International relations are relations between

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these states *"qui sont, certes, très différents les uns des autres, qui ont chacun son âme à soi, son Historie à soi, sa langue à soi, ses malheurs, ses gloires, ses ambitions à soi . . . qui sont les seules entités qui aient le droit d'ordonner et l'autorité d'agir."* (5 September 1960.) In the famous closing paragraphs of the third volume of his *Mémoires de Guerre* President de Gaulle compares the vicissitudes of France's history (*"Vieille France, accablée d'Histoire, meurtrie de guerres et de révolutions. . . ."*) to the natural rhythms of the earth, alternating winter's sterility with the rebirth of spring and the flowering of summer. The Nation-State is seen as a living organism which, like all living organisms, is unique and cannot be assimilated to, or merged with, any other without losing its own characteristic identity. Gaullist opposition to supranational institutions springs therefore, not merely from a dislike of France being subordinated to them, but also from a conviction that the Nation-State is the one really dynamic political body, to weaken which would be to weaken the mainspring of civilisation itself. *"L'intérêt supérieur de l'espèce humaine commande que chaque nation soit responsable d'elle-même. . . ."* (27 September 1965).

From this evaluation of the total autonomy of the Nation-State follow, not only scornful remarks about the Volapük or Esperanto that would be spoken in a Federal Europe, but also the conclusion that France should hasten the independence of its colonial empire and a strongly expressed disapproval of the American presence in Viet Nam. Alliances between states are possible as long as they are based on common interests, but to integrate military forces as in NATO is to risk losing the very substance of national sovereignty, to become "a nation integrated, in other words blotted out." For if Nation-States are regarded as biological entities, relationships between them must take on something of the ruthlessly competitive character of a Darwinian struggle for the survival of the fittest. *"La vie est la vie, autrement dit un combat, pour une nation comme pour un homme,"* President de Gaulle told the French people in his New Year's message for 1965, and the conclusion to be drawn from this for the direction of French foreign policy is clear: all other states are potential rivals to be vigorously resisted when they attempt to encroach on France's rights and to be suspected even when they are France's allies. Egotism is the rule in international relations, and the Machiavellian mixture of secrecy and deception which has often seemed to mark President de Gaulle's diplomacy is simply a consequence of a realistic appraisal of this fact. The eulogy in *La France et Son Armée* of the policy of the *ancien régime* *"... peu scrupuleuse quant aux moyens, grande toutefois, par l'observation d'une juste proportion entre le but poursuivi et les forces de l'Etat"* might also be a somewhat idealised description of the style which its author has tried to impart to the diplomatic action of the Fifth Republic.

ONE FACET of this theory of international politics is therefore dominated by a realistic pessimism which can become cynicism, but more usually takes on the tone of a disillusioned recognition of the imperfect "nature of things" —to use a phrase that constantly recurs in the General's writings. But over against this is set all the romantic content of 19th-century European nationalism, the *"grand rêve national"* which President de Gaulle has always believed to be essential if a people is to develop its potentialities to the full. For there is one exception to the disillusioned Gaullist view of the selfishness of Nation-States (*"ces monstres froids"*): France. If other states are egotistical by definition, France wears its egotism with a difference. Not merely is it the centre of Europe, but it is also the marching wing of European civilisation. The classical sense of moderation and order, French clarity and intellectual rigour—these things make France peculiarly suited to the exercise of international leadership and guard it against the "unbridled ambition" that has led Germany to catastrophe. *"Rêve français, par excellence, celui d'un monde organisé, où la rigueur des lois, la modération des désirs, l'ubiquité des gendarmes, garantiraient à tous la paix et à chacun son domaine."*

Yet this conception of a France supremely qualified to assume the task of leadership is not without its ambivalence. *"Confondre l'intérêt permanent de la France avec un grand idéal humain, voilà qui serait beau et, en même temps, profitable!"* There is an unconscious assumption here that France's profit is the world's advantage, and the whole passage (in *Vers l'armée de métier*) betrays the extent to which President de Gaulle's perspective on international relations departs from its sombre realism when it is a question of his own country. In fact, there are really two sides to Gaullism in its impact on the outer world. There is a toughly realistic view of relations between states which can serve to put more idealistic constructions to the test and to disinflate ideas or institutions that have lost contact with the day-to-day business of *realpolitik* in the service of national policies. But there is also a total commitment to specifically French interests and an identification of those interests with the creation of an orderly and civilised world which is accepted without proof and seems often to be unconscious. The

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flaw in this unargued premise, of course, is that the role envisaged for France—a kind of spiritual primacy—is not in the least likely to be conceded by any other Nation-State—the less likely, indeed, the more the General's own belief in the egotism of states is correct. This view of France's place in the world has as its foundation a strongly-felt myth which a foreign observer cannot but feel to be in some measure compensatory for the real loss of French power that has taken place since 1870.

THUS PRESIDENT DE GAULLE proposes two examples to his foreign admirers: a hard-headed (some would say an excessively hard-headed) view of international politics and a whole-hearted nationalism. To talk, therefore, of an Englishman or a German being "Gaullist" may mean one of several things. It may imply simple agreement with the General's diagnosis of the present conjuncture of world affairs. It may mean being a nationalist in terms of one's own country. Or it may mean being opposed to some specific Gaullist *bête noire*: European integration, a joint command for NATO, or American intervention in Viet Nam.

If to call oneself a "Gaullist" it were sufficient to be in agreement with much of what President de Gaulle has had to say about the present state of the world, there would, no doubt, be many more of them outside France. In the world of the late 1940s the existence of two ideologically directed world blocs made his appeal to the national principle look old-fashioned. Now, however, he has survived into the world of the '60s where nationality is the very heart of polycentrism both in Eastern and Western Europe. Now, too, the Gaullist view of China as incarnating certain unique historical traditions seems far more percipient than any discussion of the precise doctrinal nature of Chinese Marxism. Equally President de Gaulle has been responsible for some of the most penetrating (and, unhappily, prescient) criticism of the United Nations (*les Nations dites unies*) and, even while disagreeing with his assaults on an integrated Europe, it is impossible not to consider them as a case which requires an answer from European federalists, and which has not invariably received one. More important still, he has effectively embodied in his own person a growing feeling of impatience on the part of Europeans with subordination to their American allies on terms first drawn up at a time when Western Europe had not yet recovered from the devastation of the last war. Increased self-confidence has produced a desire for more independent status at the same time as a thaw in the relations between Russia and America has aroused anxiety lest the two continental powers should reach agreement at the expense of European interests. President de Gaulle's openly expressed opposition to a "new Yalta" undoubtedly strikes an answering chord in those Europeans who feel a passionate, if incoherent, nostalgia for an age when countries such as Britain, France, and Germany were to a large degree masters of their own fate. And Gaullist policy in Europe would probably have had far more resonance, if the General had been willing to place himself at the head of a nascent European nationalism by accepting some form of political integration in return for the increased power it would have given to one who seemed fated to be the natural leader of such a movement. As it is, President de Gaulle has deliberately renounced a major political asset, and the conflict between French claims to be considered as *primus inter pares* and the equality between partners implied by the original European idea has restricted the direct influence of his espousal of Europe's resentment at being dwarfed between America and Russia. Significantly enough, however, movements that can be described as Gaullist are to be found primarily in the two European countries with a history of world power behind them: Britain and Germany.

IN BRITAIN a political attitude which might be called "Gaullist" springs most obviously from an increasing dissatisfaction with the terms of the alliance with the United States. This dissatisfaction is to be found in the form of neutralism on the left wing of the Labour party (where it has always existed), and a far more favourable opinion is now held of President de Gaulle in these quarters than was the case in the days when he was being denounced as a "Fascist" in *Tribune*. It is also—and with greater political significance—to be found in the ranks of the Conservative party. Figures such as Mr. Duncan Sandys and Mr. Julian Amery, who have been associated with the right wing of the party, are often referred to as "British Gaullists." They admire the tough diplomatic line taken by President de Gaulle and dislike a "special" relationship with America which is based on Britain becoming an increasingly subordinate partner. No more than any Gaullist would they wish to see their country's armed forces dependent on transatlantic purchases of sophisticated weapons systems, and they and other Conservatives bitterly resented the cancellation by Mr. Wilson's government of the British strike aircraft *TSR-2* and the substitution for it of purchased American *F-111Bs*. Moreover, their conception of world politics as a power struggle would coincide with that of President de Gaulle, and, like him, they have little use for the ideological content of American or Russian foreign policy. On

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the other hand, they would usually be in favour of an integrated Europe rather than the Gaullist *Europe des états*. Mr. Sandys, in particular, has inherited the European mantle of his father-in-law, Sir Winston Churchill, though it is by no means certain just how far he is prepared to follow him in placing the American connection first in Britain's priorities.

The right wing of the Conservative party contains a number of powerful personalities, but is nonetheless a minority whose ability to influence the party as a whole (not to mention public opinion at large) is limited. What is, however, more important than the view of Mr. Sandys or Mr. Amery is the fact that dissatisfaction with Britain's present relationship to America is spreading into the centre and into the leadership of the party. President de Gaulle is said to believe that, when the Conservative party comes back to power, it will do so with a foreign policy that resembles his own, and there are signs that this prophecy is not without its plausibility. For this there are a number of reasons. Mr. Wilson's close association with the American administration has produced a counter-reaction on the part of Conservatives, who would probably have preferred the U.S. Treasury not to extract the Labour government from the financial pit which, in their opinion, it had digged for itself. They have also been becoming increasingly disillusioned with an "East of Suez" presence which the Pentagon would like Britain to maintain. This disillusionment has been expressed in an extreme form by Mr. Enoch Powell (the Tory spokesman on defence), and is only likely to be intensified by the Rhodesian entanglement which may well put the coping-stone on the growing conviction within the party that there is no future in overseas commitments—a parallel attitude to the Gaullist withdrawal from military responsibility outside Metropolitan France. Mr. Powell is no lover of America—a country which he has never visited—but Mr. Heath himself, who often gives the impression of sovereign indifference to events outside Europe, put the matter no less sharply when he told an American correspondent that he was tired of seeing Britain maintain at America's behest commitments which created a balance of payments crisis from which the country then had to be extricated by American loans, only to fall again into deficit as a result of the same commitments. The technocratic side of Mr. Heath—and he is very largely a technocrat—makes him as worried as President de Gaulle about what is called the increasing American domination of European industry (but which may be something rather different), and he is also convinced of the urgent necessity of European technological cooperation, if advanced technology is to survive in this continent. Most recently he has become the advocate of an Anglo-French nuclear striking-force "held in trust" for Europe.

All this adds up, if not to a spectacular rupture of the Anglo-American special relationship, at least to a feeling that America must be resisted economically and that Britain is at present not being paid a sufficiently high price for the assets it brings to the alliance.

THE BASIC FACT which has recently produced a certain convergence of British political opinion with the Gaullist approach to world affairs is the failure of the relationship with the United States to offer any structural solution for the increasing constriction which has afflicted British economic and political life since 1945. Europe for British administrators, scientists, and technologists offers a *carrière ouverte aux talents* without a break with their own country. America offers a brain-drain. Europe can cooperate with British industry. America can only swallow it up. Influence is gained in Washington by maintaining expensive commitments overseas. Influence in Brussels or Strasbourg is gained by abandoning them. It is not merely within the Conservative party that there is dissatisfaction with the results of the American alliance. Such dissatisfaction is inscribed in the facts of a situation where America can provide no real remedy for the ills from which Britain is suffering. The Conservative opposition simply reflects such feelings more faithfully than can the Labour government.

The malaise should not, however, be exaggerated. There are few British politicians of any weight who would take President de Gaulle's line over American intervention in Viet Nam. Those right-wing Conservatives who are sometimes described as "Gaullists" would approve of American action, the sole exception probably being Mr. Powell, though he has only said so by implication. Moreover, those British "Europeans" who are strongly in favour of British membership of the European Community—in many cases, especially within the Labour party, because they are looking for an alternative to the present relationship with the United States—would want an integrated political Europe totally opposed to President de Gaulle's conception of a confederation of states, if not necessarily to the ideas of his successors. Thus, if it is possible to speak of a British Gaullism, its nature remains confused, ranging from acceptance of a *realpolitik* conception and style of international relations to more markedly nationalist sentiments and a widely diffused feeling that something is wrong with the present shape of British foreign policy. In Britain (as, indeed,

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in pre-1958 France) there is an unvoiced desire for a rather firmer and rather more independent handling of external affairs. In this climate of opinion an adoption of Gaullist diplomatic tactics would at any rate satisfy the desire for a policy which would not merely be successfully prestigious, but would also be seen to be so, as well as cutting short the agony of theses only defended, within the British official system, by inertia and force of habit.

In the case of Germany, too, it is easy to see what an attraction the diplomatic conjuring act carried on from Paris can exert. Over the last few years the Federal Republic of Germany has made no progress towards the two essential objectives of its foreign policy. The hope that the early collapse of the East German régime (DDR) would soon lead to reunification has had to be abandoned, and this at a time when the integration of Western Europe, which Dr. Adenauer and others had seen as a creative task offering a psychological substitute for a purely national policy, is blocked by President de Gaulle. The sense of frustration engendered by these disappointments has been reflected in a desire to seek alternatives to the pattern of German diplomacy adopted during the era of Adenauer and "the Hallstein doctrine." Inevitably some of this desire for change has rubbed off on to the German relationship with America, and the change of tone has been the more marked in that the evident American desire to arrive at a *modus vivendi* with Russia has aroused fears in Germany that Bonn's interests might be sacrificed in the course of such an understanding. In order to have some cards to play in any negotiation for a European settlement and to isolate the DDR still further, the German government, at first under the auspices of Dr. Schröder and then of Willy Brandt, has now launched a determined effort to improve relations with the states of Eastern Europe—an effort all the more effective in that it can offer great economic attractions in return for the purely political concession of a restoration of normal diplomatic relations. This attempt has already met with considerable success, notably in Bucharest, and the symbolic character of a return to normality makes it a prize of greater value to Germany than to any other Western country.

In these changed conditions it is understandable that there should be so-called "German Gaullists," some of whom, however, would reject the title, and all of whom would view with horror any break in the alliance between Germany and America which might lead to a removal of American forces from Rhine and Elbe or to the unavailability of the American nuclear deterrent as a protection for Western Europe. In fact, German Gaullism (inasmuch as it is not merely a device for attacking political opponents) appears to correspond to a number of different states of mind. First, there are those who (like Dr. Adenauer) regard Franco-German friendship, with some justification, as the very cornerstone of German integration into Western Europe. These "Europeans" would not necessarily approve of the Gaullist Europe of States, but believe Germany's relationship with France to be of overriding importance. Some of them at least are also very suspicious of American intentions and are advocates of a "hard" line towards Russia. Then there are those—especially in Catholic circles in South Germany—who feel an emotional preference for a right-wing French government headed by a Catholic president as against the traditionally liberal and Protestant British and Americans. But the most solid political content of German Gaullism seems to consist of admiration for President de Gaulle's intransigent defence of French interests and ability to make the best of France's diplomatic possibilities coupled with a desire for some German statesman to do the same—a desire that has without doubt been intensified by Dr. Erhard's cavalier treatment on his final visit to Washington. If Dr. Erhard's fate was an example of the little to be gained by behaving loyally *vis-à-vis* a more powerful ally, President de Gaulle's prestige in Germany comes in large measure from the demonstration which he appears to have provided of the advantages to be expected from behaving badly. Strong government in France must necessarily look very attractive after three years of indecisive government in Germany. But this has more to do with the style of Gaullist policy than with its actual content.

There is, however, one aspect of it which is strongly echoed in Germany. A German Gaullist intellectual recently remarked that the real substance of German Gaullism and its point of contact with President de Gaulle's own beliefs is a common realisation that Western Europeans should be vitally interested in preventing a Russo-American understanding over their heads. The fear of a new Yalta agreement is widespread in Germany and extends far beyond those circles which could in any sense be called "Gaullist." Disputes over strategy and the control of nuclear warheads, fears of American troop withdrawals without previous consultation, demands by Britain and America for the payment of support costs or the purchase of equipment to offset foreign exchange expenditure, the suspicion that Germany might be "sold down the river" in the protracted negotiations over a nuclear non-proliferation treaty—

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all these factors are causes of friction between Germany and its Atlantic allies which have undoubtedly done much to make French policy seem more attractive. The view of France and Germany leading Europe's resistance to the pretensions of the two super-powers is not without its plausibility, and many German officials would agree with the Gaullist refusal to sign a non-proliferation treaty dividing the world into nuclear "haves" and "have-nots." But here again the ambivalence of Gaullist policy makes itself felt. Will President de Gaulle, while assuming the role of spokesman for Western Europe in a dialogue with Russia which he clearly covets, be any more attentive to German interests than America has been? Will not any understanding he reaches with Russia be based on a revival of the old Franco-Russian *entente* directed in the first place against Germany? Will there not, indeed, always be a temptation for any state negotiating with Russia to arrive at agreement limiting German freedom of action? German Gaullists seldom stop to think that, however little ground President de Gaulle may have yielded on the German question during his Moscow visit, French national interests, which are his chief concern, do not necessarily call for any relaxation of Russian pressure on Germany or any progress towards *Wiedervereinigung*. Moreover, President de Gaulle's recent treatment of Israel during the Arab-Israeli confrontation is bound to raise the question of the reliability of France as an ally. It would clearly be far too risky for any German politician to accept a purely European security system on the Gaullist model with the possibility that France might suddenly default on its obligations as a result of a new interpretation of its true national interest. For Germany to renounce its close relationship with the United States there would have to be the prospect of permanent and unconditional support on the part of France. But the Gaullist view of a narrowly national interest served by a foreign policy, whose alignments change without hesitation when immediate advantage is to be gained, forbids the assumption of any such lasting commitment.

THE DIFFICULTY of discussing an English or a German Gaullism consists precisely in the fact that it is impossible to conceive of an international of nationalisms. Those Conservatives in Britain who can, with most plausibility, be described as "Gaullist" in their politics were nevertheless among the most furious at President de Gaulle's veto on British entry into the European Community, and would be even more outraged if it were to be repeated once again. Those German "Gaullists" who have made close collaboration with the Fifth Republic a main plank in their platform would react with the greatest vigour were the General to arrive at an (from their standpoint) unsatisfactory agreement in Moscow. Since the interests of no two states are identical, it is impossible, in terms of the very definition of international relations furnished by Gaullist doctrine itself, for any non-French political group to be "Gaullist" in the full sense of the word. At best there can be a coincidence of aims over some specific area of policy. Thus it is perfectly possible for French and German Gaullists to agree that they do not want another pact between super-powers on the "Yalta" model. But when it comes to deciding what shape European relations with America should take, or what kind of understanding should be reached with Russia on Central Europe, there would certainly be a wide divergence of views and might even be overt hostility.

What is possible for Gaullists in France and abroad is devotion to a common style of politics and sometimes a distaste for supra-national institutions. "Distaste," however, is not quite the word for President de Gaulle's attitude towards a body like the UN. He does, indeed, dislike and apparently despise it, but he is also willing to use it for his own ends and those of France if that is feasible. In the game of power politics the moral afflatus surrounding such institutions is naturally discounted; but, since they exist, there may also be times when an act of French policy can be furthered through them. Any attempt on their part to dictate to France will, of course, be sternly rejected as a matter of principle. On another level, the assemblies of the Afro-Asian world can be swayed in order to better France's standing with the new states of Africa and Asia. But when, as on the occasion of the first French nuclear test in the Sahara, these countries through their various collective organisations presume to attack French policy, they leave President de Gaulle totally unmoved. Similarly, if the right wing of the British Conservative party is in favour of European political integration, it is partly because it believes that Britain's role in the world would be enhanced by participation in a European political union and that the unique British experience of parliamentary government would give their country an advantage within it. Thus national interests continue to dominate even within attitudes held in common, nor does preference for the General's style of politics necessarily mean agreement with any particular French policy. However much Dr. Franz-Josef Strauss may be in favour of close relations with France, he would welcome, rather than reject,

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the idea of a special relationship between Germany and the United States. France is there to be played off against the latter power rather than to replace it. Furthermore, his sharp difference with President de Gaulle on the issue of British entry into the European Community clearly springs from his realisation that only a more extensive and more powerful Europe can serve German interests; *i.e.*, by becoming an effective negotiating partner for Russia.

THUS THE MAIN EFFECT of Gaullism in Europe is likely to be the re-establishment of nationalist patterns of politics which will not, however, mean the furtherance of policies pursued by France. It is not for nothing that President de Gaulle's position in French history resembles that of Napoleon Bonaparte. Just as the nationalism of Napoleonic France raised up imitators, who ended by inflicting defeat and disaster upon it, so Gaullism may be teaching other European politicians the same strategic inflexibility and tactical suppleness in the pursuit of national interests which has won the General his apparent diplomatic successes.

NOR IS THIS TRUE only in Europe. At present America is fighting in Viet Nam in order to keep its influence on the mainland of Asia. President Johnson is, in fact, maintaining his country's long-standing national interest as a Pacific power without much consultation with his European allies. But America might well have felt itself more obliged to consult Europeans had the process of Atlantic integration not been brought to a standstill (and, indeed, actually reversed) by France. However this may be—and it is also possible that President Eisenhower and Mr. Macmillan were in the wrong when they neglected full discussion of President de Gaulle's proposal for a tripartite directorate within NATO of countries having world-wide interests and the extension of the alliance to the world as a whole—the fact seems certain: the coincidence of the Viet Nam crisis and the breakdown of the movement towards Atlantic unity has led to an orientation of American policy that is increasingly influenced by purely national interests. To this development, no doubt, the character and background of President Johnson have also contributed. Previously American support for European integration implied the creation of a Europe which would be increasingly independent of U.S. policy. Will an America absorbed in an Asian war and faced by a Europe displaying open hostility to American actions and suspicion of American motives take the same enlightened view of what constitutes stability in the old world? President de Gaulle has been correct in anticipating that nationalism would prove a more lasting influence on world affairs than ideology, but its resurgence is bound to produce a changed American attitude towards Europe as well as a changed European attitude towards the United States. It is, no doubt, true that America has a basic interest in preventing Western Europe from falling under any hegemony, but there is no reason to believe that Europeans would necessarily come off best in a clash of economic or political interests with their transatlantic protectors. An American Gaullism ought to be an alarming prospect for Europeans.

JUST HOW PERMANENT is this new pattern of politics which President de Gaulle has done so much to impose on Europe? In part, at least, the re-emergence of nationalism as a determining factor in European affairs seems likely to persist. The gradual erosion of ideology and the rise of polycentrism inevitably enhance the importance of the Nation-State. But there are many developments which could counter this trend. A new Russian leadership might revive a threat to Western Europe in a form that would provide a pressing motive to push ahead once again with Atlantic integration, and it seems almost certain that the integration of Western European countries will eventually be forced through by the mere political and economic facts of life, however long Gaullism may succeed in delaying it. There is, indeed, little reason to believe that European supra-national institutions have been finally buried by President de Gaulle, and European political unity may come to be based all the more firmly for its advocates having lost something of their pristine assurance of its inevitability. This prediction is all the more likely in that a return to more national patterns of political relationship has not brought with it, in other countries than France, any hostility to European integration. Those most in sympathy with Gaullist ideas, both in Britain and in Germany, are also keen supporters of a political Europe. Whatever may happen immediately, by far the most likely future for Europe, in the long run, is one of growing integration with Britain and its EFTA associates included.

This is a paradoxical commentary on President de Gaulle's influence in Europe, and one which also calls in doubt the permanency of the direction he has given to French foreign policy. How long will Gaullist policies survive de Gaulle? It seems unlikely that men such as M. Pompidou, or M. Giscard d'Estaing, highly conscious of the advantages to be gained from a further measure of European integration and an improvement of relations with the United

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States and possibly dependent in the National Assembly on that "European" section of the right and centre which now supports M. Jean Lecanuet, will continue to sacrifice these substantial benefits for the shadow of a national autonomy which is more apparent than real. For, despite all words to the contrary, Gaullist France has done nothing to lessen American economic penetration of Europe or to narrow the gap between American and European technology which is gradually ousting European firms from their share of advanced industrial development. If President de Gaulle wishes to stop this process (which he certainly does), it is clear that he can hardly do so by means of bilateral agreements between individual European states. Only a more integrated and a wider Europe can assert itself against America in business and technology. The present British approaches to enter the European Economic Community place France before a painful and decisive choice; one which also exposes the inner contradictions of a policy whose main theme is resistance to American preponderance, but which rejects the only effective means of organising Europe to that end.

President de Gaulle has achieved remarkable results for France with the diplomatic means at his disposal. Most recently he has mended his bridges with Bonn and taken skilful advantage of American blunders in dealing with Germany. No doubt, the honeymoon with Dr. Kiesinger's coalition will last until some divergence of French and German interests arrives to end it. But the fact remains that no conclusive answer has been given to the question addressed to President de Gaulle's government by M. Maurice Faure in a speech in the French National Assembly on 3 November 1964: "What is your influence in Washington, London, Bonn, Rome and the Benelux capitals? ... What arbitration have you exercised in the Congo, Cyprus or South Viet Nam?" Quoting these remarks, Professor Alfred Grosser has commented: "In fact, prestige and influence are not corollaries."

There is certainly a harvest of substance to be gathered from the personal prestige accumulated by President de Gaulle and from the new impetus he has imparted to the machinery of the French state. But it is not yet clear whether he will leave his successors solid reserves of international credit or diplomatic fairy gold which he alone can handle without its turning to dross. It is a major criticism of his conduct of foreign policy that he is in danger of bequeathing to a future French government a course of action that requires for its success a charisma which its leaders will be incapable of providing.

If that is so, then a spread of the Gaullist conception of international politics in the world at large and the spirit of national rivalry that informs it might prove to be to France's disadvantage in the 1970s and after.

André Breton

Walking in vacant mood towards the forest on the plain where I walk every day, in the vegetable smell of a damp, almost thundery twilight, I became aware of Breton's presence under the great oaks, as if I had gone out this evening to meet him. I have never known any other French writer who had anything approaching his feeling for nature. Yet when we think of him, we picture him mainly in the streets of Paris in search of Nadja, sitting on the terrace of a café with his followers around him, or alone, slowly ambling along the boulevards in his suede jacket, gazing skywards with the wind blowing through his long hair. As a matter of fact, he and I first met in Manhattan, which he hated, in a setting of polished granite, grimy brick, glass, and cement. But during the years of our friendship, I often noticed that he was as capable of being moved by a tree, a leaf, a moonstone, or the pale fire of a bird's crest, as by any of those landscapes made up of long, solemn sentences in *Arcane 17* or *L'Amour fou*. Being ultra-sensitive but never in the least sentimental, acutely receptive but with a great power of radiation, he was the dynamic centre of a constantly renewed phenomenon which he had christened Surrealism, and which was his idea of poetry and *"l'intelligence poétique de l'univers."* We had not seen each other for years, heaven knows why, yet this evening the friendly shade of André Breton, whose body was buried this morning, was waiting for me at the edge of my Celtic forest.

War, exile in America with its violent inner drift and prolonged, sometimes liberating, alienation—all this was necessary before Breton, who had been one of the Baudelairean "beacons" of an adolescence spent far from Paris, then the (rejected but nonetheless sacred) symbol of in-

André Breton, *poet and author of the famous "Surrealist Manifestoes," died in Paris on 27 September 1966 at the age of seventy.* Denis de Rougemont, *who lives in Ferney-Voltaire, is the author of* Love in the Western World *and other works.*

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effectual revolt for the young Personalist movements for which I fought, suddenly ceased to be a myth and became a friend, after we had dined alone together in New York, in a little Greenwich Village restaurant. (According to the diary I kept at the time, the date was 20 June 1942.) Forty-eight hours before, I had met him at the Office of War Information, to which I had just been appointed. Every day I wrote two long scripts for "The Voice of America Speaking to France" and I had two teams of announcers, who took turns in reading them with alternating voices; they included Ozenfant the painter (who died recently), Claude Lévi-Strauss, one of the sons of George and Ludmilla Pitoeff, and Breton. (He had hit on this method of earning just enough to live on, so as not to have to compromise with the snobbish influences surrounding him.) He complained very amiably about the fact that during our years in Paris we had been, or had imagined ourselves to be, unable to meet. "*Ce sont de ces conneries! Et que l'on expie!* (Bloody stupid, and we're paying for it!)...." The remark was very typical of him.

Sometimes I dream that I am getting on well with some man or woman with whom I have nothing in common or with whom I have broken off relations. On that evening, in the Village, the dream came true. No doubt we talked of subjects that were likely to bring us together—passionate love, the troubadours, psychoanalysis, and St.-John Perse—but we also dealt with matters that could have led to a head-on collision, *i.e.*, our respective positions with regard to religion, morality, and politics. Soon we were in that state of euphoria in which argument leads to agreement.

A few days later, he expressed the wish that we might meet "automatically, as it were." The OWI had the advantage of providing daily opportunities for such meetings. Shortly afterwards, I wrote in my diary:

"*A day at the* OWI.—André Breton, magnificently courteous and as patient as a lion that has resolved to ignore the bars of its cage, appeared at about five o'clock at the far end of the big room. He lent us the aid of his noble voice, which has the additional charm of a slight sibilance, but he surrendered neither the proud carriage of his head nor his solemn, admiring and indiscernibly ironical attentiveness. He deserves a kingdom! Or rather a Church to govern, so that he could revive the splendid name of *sacerdos* in a stormy atmosphere! But he is not at home in America. He fights shy of success, leaving Salvador Dali, whom he has dubbed Avida Dollars, to make money out of the label 'Surrealism,' which has even more prestige here than in Paris.

"Every evening, after my script has been finished under pressure and, before being handed to the announcers, is passing through a series of offices from the censors to the duplicating machine, we find time to chat for a while. Often we talk about fabulous parties that we dream of organising.

"One of them, for instance, which is intended to last three days, will be held behind locked doors in some great house, and each guest will bring an unknown person with him, and everyone will be in fancy dress and wearing a mask. Conversation will be carried out in a strictly prescribed style, the times regulated, and the slightest sign of laxity in bearing or language will call for immediate penalties. Restoring meaning to speech, gesture, and costume, and thereby re-creating Surprise.... Introduction to the hieratic life.... This is a compensatory daydream, as can be seen by a glance at the setting in which we are talking. In the room, the chatter of thirty typewriters is accompanied by an obbligato from two teleprinters. Green eye-shields are used against the harsh lights, sleeves are rolled up, exhaustion is in the air, and small panics among the gossiping groups...."

AT OUR FIRST real meeting, I had discovered something about Breton that I am sure no one has mentioned in the hundreds of obituary articles which have appeared. In spite of his life-long and vigilant hatred for all the visible and official manifestations of Christianity, he was essentially a religious man. It was no doubt because he thought Christianity insufficiently religious that he incessantly disparaged it. He wished for ritual mysteries, wrapt worship, permanent and furious rebellion, but according to his own rules, of course, and a mad, challenging strictness, rejoining the Inquisition.... He told me that evening that once, in a cobbler's backshop in the Morvan, he had discovered the portraits of Mother Angélique Arnaud and Marat facing each other from opposite walls: nothing could have thrilled him more than the craftsman's simultaneous veneration for Jansenism and Jacobinism. The two doctrines have nothing in common apart from that lofty tone of fanatical rigour which was one of the aspects of poetry, as Breton saw it; in other words, an aspect of his *religion*. He deduced from it a highly sensitive moral system, by which his life was governed absolutely, and it brought about sudden and rather unexpected sentences of excommunication, uttered in a loud voice and accompanied by a throwing back of the head. The victim would disappear into outer darkness, having been ejected, broken, and insulted to the soul. On other occasions, Breton would be content with one or two polite pinpricks or a jeering epithet, and the disciple,

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METHUEN

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flattered only yesterday beyond his wildest hopes, would depart, deflated.

(How many poets, and even more painters, have never been able to approve of themselves in their heart of hearts, because Breton did not accept and celebrate them!)

I witnessed more than one scene of this kind during the meetings of the variable, and more or less haphazard, group that André Breton had reassembled after arriving in New York. The nucleus was formed by a few painters who were to change the trend of the fine arts in the United States: Max Ernst, Matta, Tanguy, Masson occasionally, and always the "artist-inventor," Marcel Duchamp, who twenty years later was to be the father of Pop Art. There were also poets, anthropologists, and a few rather fey young women who seemed to have come out of Shakespeare's comedies. We met once or twice a week in each others' apartments, because there are no sidewalk cafés in New York, and we went in very seriously for writing games or telepathic experiments. Sometimes we arranged a celebration (like the one dedicated to the Number 21) or an exhibition or a window-display (the one devoted to my book, *La Part du diable*, was designed by Breton, Seligmann, and Duchamp). I would go to call on Breton and he would read poetry aloud to me in tones of sustained solemnity as he strode up and down his studio. *"L'Européen le plus moderne c'est vous Pape Pie X!"* he would shout as he recited *Zone*. This pope did not worry him, he was but a verse by Apollinaire. But what about the litany of Christ the Aviator in the same poem.... One day he read me his "Ode to Charles Fourier," which he had just copied out in careful copperplate and had adorned with crayon-drawings of flowers. At the time, Fourier was his new intercessor; he insisted on reading me the chapters in which Fourier describes the functions and *regulated* pleasures of the workers in the phalansterian Utopia. Breton talked about Fourier as if he were a young avant-garde writer whom he had just been the first person to discover. "Frantic ghost of Fourier, vibrant ghost of Flora Tristan, delightful ghost of Père Enfantin... a great debt of reparation is owing to you," he was to write two years later in *Arcane 17*, and he went on: "In spite of their eccentricities and the effects of their intoxicated imaginations, one cannot deny to the reformers of the first half of the 19th century the benefits of pristine freshness." Breton never gave a better definition of himself than in this last phrase. I remember one evening when he declared that it was time someone looked more closely into St. Augustine, whom he personally considered as the forerunner of the Jansenists. We told him that whole libraries had been written on the subject, but he obviously did not believe us, and rightly so; his Augustine had no connection with the Augustine who had been canonised by "obscurantism."

One Sunday morning in New York, at the bottom end of a deserted Madison Avenue, with twenty-storey cliffs rising on either side, I suddenly found myself face to face with Breton, who was walking along as if in a dream. "I was thinking about the absolute necessity of founding a religion," he said. "Why should it not be based on the worship of a blue stone?"

I THINK I WAS the only one of his friends who admitted to being, and wished to be, a "Christian." This inconceivable anomaly disturbed him greatly and often seemed to be about to provoke solemn sentence of exclusion. In March 1945, when my book, *Les Personnes du Drame*, was published in New York, Breton told me that his wife had read a few chapters of it and that he could tell that the book was "dangerous." When I pretended not to understand his meaning, he explained that he could accept a good deal of Pascal, because of the tone, but that I had really gone too far in my book, to the point of even falling into the language of piety, "if I may say so...." This was a very grave, and perhaps unforgivable, offence. And I am sure that when he saw I was not going to refute the accusation, it crossed his mind to have me arraigned at the bar of the Group. But after all, since I had never been a professed Surrealist, how could I be excluded? And moreover, he had no desire to break off relations with me. He found a way out of the dilemma, which was to ask Marcel Duchamp to act as arbitrator. It was agreed that we should meet next day in a little French bar and have dinner together. I got there at the appointed time and found Marcel already installed and perfectly serene. I do not know whether he had read the incriminating work. In essence, what he said was: *"Je crois que vous croyez?"* (He was delighted with the ambiguity of the verb "to believe" in his sentence.) "What concern is that of Breton's? Everyone is entitled to his own mythology. He makes a religion of his Surrealism...." André Breton turned up very late, as had been arranged, and quickly grasped that the matter had been settled. Since Marcel, whom he looked upon as infallible, seemed to have absolved me, he himself could go on meeting me without losing face. I have recounted this incident to make the essential point that friendship was sometimes rather more important to Breton than his religious passion (which, need I repeat, was atheistic and anti-Christian).

The great contradiction which tensed the bow of a poetic existence in many respects so noble and exemplary was his simultaneous desire to

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change life through passionate rebellion (*"La beauté sera convulsive ou ne sera pas"*) and to regulate it down to the last tiny breath. At once authoritarian and libertarian, anarchist and sacerdotal, a rhetorician of revolt and a precious designer of Mallarmean *"bibelots,"* he was perpetually blazing a trail—that could be followed only by himself—between delirium and extreme intellectual rigour. In his case more than anyone else's, I am sure that he followed—boldly yet with exact obedience to the signs he divined around him—what I must call his vocation, the relationship between man and the transcendent.

Denis de Rougemont

Song of the October Wind

A mighty air-sea, fierce and very clean,
Was gliding in across the city.
Oxygenating gusts swept down and
Chloroformed us, in a light too bright to see by.

On pavements—china and milk pages
In a good book, freshly iced by the printing press—
October flash-floated. And you and I were moving
With alert, sane, and possessive steps. At home,

My sofa wrote her creaking, narcoleptic's Iliad.
My bathroom drank the Styx (bathwater
Of the Underworld). My telephone took all its voices
And gave them to the Furies, to practise with.

While slowly—to gigantic, muddy blows of music
From a pestle and mortar—roof, floor, walls, doors,
My London, stuffed with whisky-dark hotels,
Began to pant like a great ode!

And threw, carelessly, into our veins
Information—all the things we needed to know,
For which there are no words, *not even thoughts.*
And this was an ode shaken from a box of rats.

The first sky from October's aviary
Of bone-dry, thudding skies, joyful, free, and young,
With its wings lifted our souls, heavy as cities,
Effortlessly. We were trustworthy again.

Ritz, Savoy, Claridge's, hotels full of peacock words,
Were beaten white by Boreas; and as
Electric frosts scratched the windows
Fitting in their awkward childish pane of glowing stone,

We—copied the foaming *with our souls*!
The same ode tore the streets inside us. And lit
Catwalks, sofas, taxis in that city with a light
So bright, even the blind could see by it.

Rosemary Tonks

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The Democracy of Prejudice

By Anthony Burgess

"WE" IS the most treacherous of the English pronouns. The Malays, who have an honest language, distinguish between *kami*, which means us as opposed to you, and *kita*, which takes in the spoken to as well as the speaker. The Borneo Malays—and this is an interesting analogue to Old British nanny-usage—push the "you" aspect of *kita* so far that the "we" element totally disappears. Now what does the "we" of this title[1] signify? B.B., M.L. and C.O. say, in their "Address to the Reader," that "the critic who lets you know that he always looks for something to like in works he discusses is not telling you anything about the works or about art; he is saying 'see what a nice person I am.'" (Conversely, if you don't want to be known as a nice person, which seems to be one of Miss Brophy's masochist aims, knock hell out of anything you review, provided that it is by a male author.) See what a nice person I am: I've been trying to find in this book the properties of an idiosyncratic profession of faith or unfaith. But the "we" can't be *kami*, because the authors are doing without the fifty books already and don't have to justify their rejection to themselves. It must be *kita*, and a *kita* closer to Brunei than to Johore Bahru. We're being told what to dislike and, on the margin, like, and the telling is half-disguised as the showier sort of WEA teaching. But it is really an inept kind of con-trick, based on irrational appeals to rationality, pushed along with sneers, dirty sniggers, the snobbishness of the ill-bred. I've never in all my reading encountered such bloody arrogance.

This deplorable little work has been duly deplored in the literary reviews and the "class" papers: only the *Sunday Express*, I think, found anything to praise. The authors are now rubbing themselves in an ecstasy of the kind granted only to Exclusive Brethren. In *Books and Bookmen* they have, abusing or counter-abusing their critics, reaffirmed their role of three-tailed scourge of the weak and triple pillar of the strong. They are having a rather shrill good time. And, my dear, there are still the Commonwealth and American reviews to come. If everybody says we're wrong, why then we must be right, along with Robert Pitman. I don't propose to help inflame the delicious abscess. I merely want to express my disquiet that this is what British literary criticism should have come to. Miss Brophy, who is Mrs. Michael Levey, was awarded a Jubilee Scholarship at St. Hugh's College, Oxford. The merit of her novels is widely recognised, and she has won two important literary prizes. Mr. Levey is a master of arts of both Oxford and Cambridge; he is a distinguished art historian, has been Slade Professor and is second-in-command of the National Gallery. Mr. Osborne is respected as a music critic, an authority on Italian opera, a hard-working magazine editor and a responsible officer of the Arts Council. Here, then, are three people of large culture and considerable social standing. They have enough fame and they are presumably not short of money. What then has impelled them to publish so ill-conceived, ignorant and vulgar a book?

ONE ANSWER, a shameful one, is a hunger for notoriety. Their book, far from being ignored (if it had been the work of uneducated people that would have been a just response), has had wide newspaper coverage; they themselves have been interviewed at length on commercial television. Like children, they have shown off, and the showing-off has provoked attention. They have even angered a number of people, and

[1] *Fifty Works of English Literature We Could Do Without.* By BRIGID BROPHY, MICHAEL LEVEY and CHARLES OSBORNE. Rapp and Carroll, 25s.

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anger, like sexual desire, can be flattering to its object. What they regard as iconoclasm can also be seen as the indiscriminate destructiveness of infants who will do anything to get notice. They kick *Hamlet, Pilgrim's Progress,* and the poems of T. S. Eliot. Very naughty, most smackable. But they also pulverise the already broken pieces of *Aurora Leigh* and *Lorna Doone* and *Tom Brown's Schooldays*. They're still in the nursery, cut off from the big world. In the nursery are a few books, many of which they don't like. They have still to engage libraries and the systematic study of literature.

Their first target is *Beowulf*. I take it that they must all have read this in the original, since, in their preliminary address, they say: "We have . . . excluded translations. That is why the Bible is not listed" (that would have been naughty fun, wouldn't it?—having a crack at all those dreary patriarchs, the trite proverbs, the one-sided sexuality, the bloodthirsty tribal god, as though the world outside Old Brompton Road actually liked them). I don't think students of *Beowulf* have ever really preferred its eponymous hero to Grendel and his mother, though the crunching-up of the Danes because they drink late and loud seems to be going too far. And I don't think the passing of value-judgments much concerns them either. Nobody, in fact, tackles *Beowulf* merely because he wants a good read: he can get that, can't he, from *Flesh*, which still sells well in the bazaars. We go to *Beowulf* out of curiosity, a very reasonable motive, and for the sort of special pleasure to be gained from watching the manipulation of a language both alien and familiar. Doubtless, as we are told, "we need some respectable pseudo-Homeric epic from which to make Northern literature evolve," but, unless one of these three can do a Macpherson, we have to be content with what's already there. And we can't hope to understand the evolution of English literature without knowing something about the aesthetic behaviour of English before French and Latin got into it.

AH, BUT I'M on the wrong track, aren't I? We're concerned not with historical monuments but with books as isolated instruments of pleasure and enlightenment. Nonsense: literature is a continuum. Ignore Anglo-Saxon literature and the technique of headrime it bequeathed to Middle English literature, and you're able to talk, *à propos* the York Mystery Plays, of drunken monks writing doggerel: "They *must* have been drunk: the preponderance of alliterative verse in the plays points to this. Alliteration is most frequently resorted to in intoxication." The jettisoning of history enables you to see the Middle Ages spatially—an island no one wants to visit, what with its "crudity of life and religious thought" and the mean "intellectual capacities of the credulous citizenry." Soon you will reach the state of scoffing at old writers because they lived before the Enlightenment or before Freud. After condemning *Pilgrim's Progress*—a "monstrous tract . . . a curious monument to frightened conformity"—the trio give us some of Bunyan's verse, which—"*For having now my method by the end,/Still, as I pulled, it came*"—provides us at least with a dirty laugh. But we have, presumably, to be respectful in the presence of tool-swinging Roderick Hudson.

Apart from unwillingness to look at literature historically, Osborne and the Leveys are above being ashamed at their own ignorance. We can ignore small gaffes like the retitling of "Kubla Khan" as "Xanadu," but we're entitled to ask for evidence when we're told that Ben Jonson's verse is laboured, that he is "the great Elizabethan non-poet," that his intelligence is "arid" and his language lacks vigour. This sort of evidence, perhaps:

> *See, a carbuncle*
> *May put out both the eyes of our St. Mark;*
> *A diamond would have bought Lollia Paulina,*
> *When she came in like starlight, hid with jewels,*
> *That were the spoils of provinces; take these,*
> *And wear, and lose them: yet remains an earring*
> *To purchase them again, and this whole state.*

Or, as their special concern is *The Alchemist* ("the plot is uninteresting, and is hardly animated by the pedantry of the verse in which it is expressed"), this:

> *My foot-boy shall eat pheasants, calver'd salmons,*
> *Knots, godwits, lampreys: I myself will have*
> *The beards of barbels served, instead of salads;*
> *Oil'd mushrooms; and the swelling unctuous paps*
> *Of a fat pregnant sow, newly cut off,*
> *Drest with an exquisite and poignant sauce;*
> *For which I'll say unto my cook,* There's gold,
> Go forth and be a knight.

But the reference to meat-eating, with its exaggerated tincture of cruelty, must certainly put Miss Brophy off. Pedantic or horrid, which is it? Both? Put meat-eating in your work, deprive your female characters of orgasms, present religion as something other than superstition, chase the odd fox, and you can be sure—however exquisitely you write—of earning Brophy censure or condemnation. She, they, subscribe to the heresy of subjectivism: literature is not there to modify your (mainly irrational) convictions but to confirm them. And if a book doesn't confirm them, the Life Force help it.

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The most summary of all the condemnations is of Gerard Manley Hopkins, and it can be quoted in full:

> Hopkins's is the poetry of a mental cripple. Sympathise as one might with his confusion, with the absurd struggle that went on within him between priest and poet, it is impossible not to end by feeling completely exasperated with the disastrous mess he made of his life. The muscle-bound, determinedly "difficult" verse that he produced is really abhorrent. It may have a sentimental appeal to his co-religionists, but to others Hopkins is surely the most unrewarding of the Victorian poets. The interior war in his permanently bared breast between aesthetic and ascetic is a blatantly uneven combat: the aesthete scarcely exists. The man is all metaphysics, mysticism and neurotic longing for the cross. Add to these disabilities the baleful influence of Dante Gabriel and Christina Rossetti, and it is immediately apparent that poor Hopkins hadn't a chance.
>
> In his groping attempts to find his own mode of expression, Hopkins is not unlike Browning, but he lacks completely Browning's sudden illumination. Hopkins is at the mercy both of his superstitions and of his theories. It was the theories that proved the more dangerous to his verse. His meaningless and arbitrary definitions of "inscape" and "instress" serve to underline the almost Nihilistic emptiness of his thought. In a letter, Hopkins wrote: "You know I once wanted to be a painter. But even if I could I would not, I think, now, for the fact is that the higher and more attractive parts of the art put a strain on the passions which I shd think it unsafe to encounter." No wonder his poetry is so cringingly irrelevant. There is nothing brave about his obscurity: it is that of weak-mindedness and theology.

In answering this, it is, one might think, possible that we're falling into the trap of a somewhat heavy-handed spoof, but the subtler forms of humour are evidently beyond this earnest trio. Can it be answered? Probably not, since most of the terms used are loaded with the connotations of private prejudice: "metaphysics," "mysticism" (unless used in connection with St. Teresa, one of the few women in history to be sculpted in orgasm), and "theology" are altogether pejorative. This kind of imposition could be amusing in a Samuel Butler way, but the whole passage goes beyond the mere registration of anti-clericalism. There are far too many statements demonstrably untrue. In Hopkins there was no struggle between poet and priest, however these three like to think that the two vocations are incompatible. His early work had Keatsian rather than Pre-Raphaelite qualities; his true voice is raised after ordination. He was never "confused," though he was con-

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scious of failure in his mission and, in his last poems, expressed the horror of the dark night of the soul (indigestion really, these three will say: "I am gall, I am heartburn"). He formulated his theories only after composing his first long poem in sprung rhythm. There is not one poem which embodies "neurotic longing for the cross." He has never made much of an appeal to Catholics: his great followers in the 1930s were the young left-wing poets Auden and Day Lewis. His verse expresses no "ascetic" urge. Far from not existing, the "aesthete" in him tends to over-richness. He never "groped" for a new mode of expression: "The Wreck of the Deutschland" is mature and assured writing. We grant that he was superstitious, if to be superstitious is to be a Catholic. No amount of good-humoured acquiescence in semantic distortion can, however, reconcile the contradictory sneers—"mental cripple" and "muscle-bound," "permanently bared breast" and "cringingly irrelevant" (irrelevant to what?); "all metaphysics" and "almost Nihilistic emptiness of his thought"; "meaningless" and "arbitrary" (an arbitrary meaning is still, presumably, a meaning). If "poor Hopkins" is confused, what shall we say of poor Brophy, Levey and Osborne?

THIS SORT of half-literate and more than half-ignorant pseudo-criticism would be harmless enough if its perpetrators did not profess an anti-philistine and reformist aim. The danger is that students, bemused by the status, reputations, and qualifications of the authors, may reproduce this kind of waffle in their examination papers. No examiner objects to reasoned abuse, but evidence of failure to read the texts is unforgivable. "Discuss the work of Gerard Manley Hopkins." Off we go then: "Hopkins's is the poetry of a mental cripple. . . ." Could the examinee possibly hope for a pass? And yet he might seem justly aggrieved: after all, if printed books by leaders of British taste can get away with it, why not a mere candidate for a degree?

The really worrying thing is that this work exemplifies, however grossly, abusively and pigheadedly, the state of British criticism today. Reviewers, especially, mistake the parading of prejudice for the objective appraisal of a book. "Catholic novelists are becoming something of a bore . . . the imagery resolves into an unappetising fester of camp tat . . . we're all sick of lesbian *ménages* . . . as soon as I see that a book has a provincial setting I run a mile . . . puffed-up pseudo-masculinity with a show-off of erections that are merely piss-proud . . . it's about time novelists dropped good and evil . . . Miss A's good literary manners are merely spinsterish prissiness . . . another saga of the avocadau pair belt . . . the trouble with Mr. B is that he can't write . . . it isn't his hero that's confused but his prose-style . . . jogtrot traditionalism . . . abortive experimentalism. . . ."

See, for the last time, what a nice person I am. When I don't like a writer my first instinct is to look for the fault in myself. I don't like Jane Austen, though many people do: this must be because of a failure in my own temperament. Really, of course, I should write something like this:

> Let Austen have her swink to her reserved. Was it worth while, this sedulous setting-down of tedious flirtations, drawing-room intrigues, pompous avowals? There's no intellectual content (only Kotzebue seems to be mentioned, though not even by name), no attempt at rendering sensuous immediacies—only the interminable record of insipid courtship and venal marriage brokerage. Outside the smug little parsonages and *rentier* retreats the Napoleonic wars—the real world of change and history—thud and boom away, but there is no mention of them here: the hermetically sealed life of the boudoir and parlour—with occasional healthful toddles round the rose garden—twitters on in blessed self-sufficiency. And even inside the twee miniature world only one human stratum is taken seriously: the maids and coachmen and cooks are nameless, faceless, beneath notice, the sub-human helots who sustain the simpering misses, the mothers given to the vapours, the valetudinarian parsons and slippered bookmen. Miss Austen (as we must affectedly continue to call her, along with her fellow-spinster admirers of both sexes) has the bitchy capacity for remembering exactly what she hears and reproducing it exactly, but she has no mastery (or mistressy—no, on second thoughts, a shocking word: how her readers would blush) of the *récit*. Her prose-style has a school-exercise flatness; her little *mots* are pathetically inept; her descriptions are woolly. Like her twentieth-century counterpart, Miss Brophy, she is distinguished only for a spendid insularity of thought and manner, and an extraordinary infelicity of expression.

I understand that Mr. Osborne and the Leveys are next going to tell us what pictures to get rid of. I look forward to the same bizarre mixture of the misunderstood great and the non-starter—the unbelievably disparate brought together only by irrational dislike, the democracy of prejudice. If we can have *Hamlet* and *Lorna Doone* in the same gallery we can also have *The Last Watch of Hero* and the Botticelli *Venus*. Hogarth will be rejected because he ate too much beef (or accepted because his dog is in the forefront of his self-portrait?). And then, with Mr. Osborne in the lead, they can have a crack at music. Already, in the margin of this present book, *The Bride of Lammermoor* is

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slated so that Donizetti's opera can be called "a valid work of art," and Brahms and Dixieland jazz occupy the same slot of rhythmic ineptitude. I don't expect anything like the following in *Fifty Musical Works We Could Do Without*:

> The emasculated elegance of Mozart could be regarded as over-compensation for his ridiculous butch name Wolfgang. His reputation is based on such extra-artistic factors as his child-prodigy beginning and his macabre-romantic end. Add to these his sickening fecundity—the pouring-out of notes is, to the uneducated, the inspiration of genius when it is in fact nothing but phonorrhea, an incontinence the more morbid for being sugary—and you have a sufficient explanation for the gawping indiscriminating awe or head-wagging joy which is accorded his very ordinary music. His fortieth sympathy in G minor (a very ordinary key) is as good or as bad an example as any of the so-called major works of his rushed and excessive output (he wrote rapidly because he needed the money, but he was not even a good businessman: he died in debt). The tunes of this symphony, if tunes they can be called, are four-square nursery jingles, made portentous by being put in a minor key, though even here he shows the inconsistency of the weak-minded, for sometimes they also appear in the major, where their vapidity is embarrassingly apparent. He is repetitious and rhythmically unadventurous (contrast this work with Stravinsky's *Le Sacre du Printemps*!) and his orchestration is thin—only two horns, and those without valves; no trombones. He fails even to make the most of the instrumental resources he has: the double-basses invariably double the 'cellos.
>
> His third movement is a minuet—the most stilted dance-form imaginable. He attempts to disguise its inadequacies by peppering it with *Sturm und Drang* huffing and puffing, but his artistic impotence is pointed by the fact that this movement is in the same key as the first and last (yes, G minor). The other movements are silly and ill-written, codpieces filled with air. We've got rid of the Austro-Hungarian Empire; isn't it about time we got rid of Mozart as well?

The trouble is that, since Miss Brophy loves him so much, one almost feels like saying yes.

Hellenes, Hebrews & Americans

By D. W. Brogan

IN HIS PREFACE to the first volume of his learned, acute and combative book on the Enlightenment, Professor Gay thanks various institutions that have provided him with an opportunity to work at his theme and to try out parts of it on select and only formally captive audiences. Although the University of California at Berkeley is not one of the institutions thanked, these lectures,[1] given there in 1966, are more than a mere parergon; they are part of a campaign for the ideas and achievements of the Enlightenment, a campaign in which Professor Gay has taken on nearly all comers, has not been intimidated by any reputation, not even by the great reputation of Perry Miller.

Professor Gay is for Kant and Voltaire, for Hume and Diderot. For he accepts the view that

> as the Enlightenment saw it, the world was and had always been divided between ascetic, superstitious enemies of the flesh, and men who affirmed life, the body, knowledge, and generosity; between mythmakers and realists, priests and philosophers. Heinrich Heine, wayward son of the Enlightenment, would later call these parties, most suggestively, Hebrews and Hellenes.

Professor Gay is a Hellene and the New England historians he discusses were ideologically, though not by consanguinity, Hebrews.

It is one of the handicaps that this brilliant polemic suffers under that few people in England will know much of the controversies round which the battle rages or, more serious, will understand why Professor Gay should think it worth-while to battle for a hostile assessment of the claims of New England historiography in the 17th and 18th centuries. But born in Germany (and so conscious of what harm bad historiography can do?), Professor Gay thinks it is time to show that the claims made in the past generation for New England as being as much a part of the Enlightenment as Old England, if not as much as Scotland, France or East Prussia, are exaggerated and are fruits of a mis-

[1] *A Loss of Mastery. Puritan Historians in Colonial America.* By PETER GAY. Berkeley and Los Angeles, University of California Press, $4.50; London, Cambridge University Press, 36s.

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guided patriotism, of what used to be called "filio-pietistic" writing rather than of a Rankean determination to report the thing as it was.

In a sense, the job is too easy. New England produced no Clarendon, not even a Burnet; in the 18th century it produced no Hume, no Robertson, not to speak of a Gibbon. History was designed to illustrate the work of God among his new chosen people, the English, who had left Goshen for Canaan to found in Massachusetts a "citty sett upon a hill." And the story to be told was, like the story told in the Old Testament, a story of the merciful providences of New England's God set off against the repeated backslidings of the chosen people. Hence the recounting of special providences; hence the "jeremiads" in which the ministers denounced the encroaching of the Philistines, the equivalents in New England being the Papists and the more subtle and successful Anglicans. It was not a matter of theology only; there was practice to be reproved and discipline to be enforced. There were equivalents of the High Places that seduced the children of Israel and although Charles I and James II could count as equivalents of Pharaoh or the Kings of Assyria, it was necessary to accept deliverance at the hands of an ambiguous Calvinist like William III and accept royal patronage of the new priests of Baal, the agents of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel whose ambiguous role Professor Carl Bridenbaugh has so recently demonstrated to us.

Modern American historians write of "a usable past," but they do not interpret that as narrowly as did Bradford, Cotton Mather, and Jonathan Edwards. The conscious imitation by themselves, or by God, of the History of the Children of Israel, made New Englanders bad historians. History *had* to repeat itself and so it did. (Professor Gay might have noted that the real spokesman for the Enlightenment in 18th-century America, Boston-born Benjamin Franklin, imitated Cotton Mather in *Poor Richard,* and also in his high-handed dealing with other people's correspondence.) But if Bradford is moving and Mather is interesting, Jonathan Edwards is formidable. He was either very right or very wrong. Like Professor Gay, I believe he was wrong, but perhaps more can be said for the intellectual stature of Edwards than is said here. He was an acute metaphysician and, if that matters, a more acute theologian than were most of his moderate opponents. A gallant and most learned attempt has been made by a pupil of Perry Miller's, Alan Heimert, to stake out a great field for Edwards. But his study[2] came out too late to change Professor Gay's mind—and I think I am safe in asserting that it couldn't have changed it anyway.

Cogently, Professor Gay argues that the spirit of modern science changed the climate of opinion. (Professor Trevor-Roper has recently shown in this journal how belief in witchcraft died, not because of new evidence, but because of the change in "the climate of opinion"—a phrase we owe to the Cambridge Platonists who firmly believed in witches.)

Here we come to a much controverted point in American cultural history. Cotton Mather, who supported inoculation and studied Newton, was not a mere obscurantist. He *was,* despite sceptics, an *F.R.S.* He was (though Professor Gay does not tell us) an honorary doctor of that rising centre of the Enlightenment, the University of Glasgow. Jonathan Edwards, when not totally absorbed in explicating the Divine plan of salvation (which included a real heaven and a real hell as Professor Gay rather unkindly points out), enjoyed the study of physics. But, as Professor Gay more than once points out in his *Enlightenment,*[3] there was an overlapping of the old and the new. He thinks it right (so do I) to talk of "the Enlightenment." The leaders might quarrel, let each other down, as d'Alembert did Diderot. They might gang up against Rousseau as a renegade, but they were allies and often nervous allies. Few had the magnanimity of Hume or the good temper of Franklin. They might be on good terms even with officers of the *"infâme"* as was Diderot. Some of the spokesmen for Christian orthodoxy were, in some ways, themselves enlightened. After all, the *Journal de Trévoux* was useful to Gibbon, although edited by Jesuits; and another Jesuit, Boscovitch was, by our standards, a more important mathematician than d'Alembert. But that Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards were not totally immune to the new learning doesn't prove much. The great Oxford Ultramontane theologian, "Ideal" Ward, had, as *his* hobbies, mathematics and Mozart. Indeed, there is a sense in which Dr. Heimert is right. Jonathan Edwards can only be restored to his old eminence if you accept his theology or, if you like, philosophy, and see the Enlightenment as going off the rails with its optimistic and shallow view of Man's tragic situation. This most, though not all, modern men find it difficult to do. (They may have reason to repent their deafness and blindness in the next world.)

More than once, Professor Gay quotes Kant to the effect that the 18th century was not an enlightened age, although it was an Age of En-

[2] *Religion and the American Mind.* By Alan Heimert. Harvard University Press, $12.50; London, Oxford University Press, £5.

[3] *The Enlightenment: an Interpretation.* New York, Knopf. $8.95 (2 volumes), and London, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 63s.

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lightenment. After all, according to Scottish legend, it was Hume's religion that kept Hume from a Glasgow chair and he was honoured in the New Town of Edinburgh by having a street called after him, but with the honour disguised by calling it St. David's Street and allowing the ignorant to believe that it was called after David I (grandson of that unfortunate King of Scots, Duncan).

Perhaps Professor Gay, by concentrating on Edwards, plays down the role of the more sceptical ministers of Boston. After all, Edwards was a student at Yale not Harvard, and later President of what was then "the College of New Jersey" (not, *pace* Professor Gay, "New Jersey College"). Philadelphia was a real capital of the Enlightenment and much that angered 20th-century anti-clericals was the legacy of John Wesley and not of Jonathan Edwards.

BUT THERE IS ONE PROBLEM that I wish Professor Gay had developed more fully. Why did the specific identification of the New Englanders with the Children of Israel die out into a vague patriotic Protestantism? Perhaps the parallel was less and less plausible; perhaps the domination of the "American" mind by New England is taken too seriously? But there is one solution that, I hazard, has some plausibility. Orthodox Jews, then and now, have an elaborate calendar of feasts, the "High Holy Days," that recall to the Jews the Covenant of God with their Father Abraham. True, today the great work of Jahveh may be celebrated on the Grossinger circuit rather than in the Chasidic *Mea Sherim* of Brooklyn. But it is celebrated.

The New Englanders, barring the old Catholic festivals like Christmas, had no rituals, no religious dress; they had to rely on sermons, or "jeremiads," or on political festivals like the Fifth of November. The Revolution helped a little. There was the anniversary of the "Boston Massacre"; there was the Fourth of July; there was Washington's Birthday. As that acute, German-trained critic of American Protestant orthodoxy, John Williamson Nevin, pointed out, for some divines the celebration of the Eucharist was a kind of religious Fourth of July. Perhaps the sudden flood of antiquarian societies, the creation of the "Pilgrim" legend, the worship of the flag (as *"The Star-spangled Banner"* replaced *"My Country 'tis of Thee"* as the popular national anthem long before it became the official anthem): all represented an effort to give the view of the American people as the new People of God a public liturgy. This has grown into what both Jews and Christians of the old school would have called (and some still do call) idolatry. The heirs of Mather and Edwards are historians like George Bancroft, the new Jaels

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and Deborahs are the Daughters of the American Revolution. But they have no Hadassah so no Purim. Even the Ku Klux Klan is a bastard of the world view of Cotton Mather and Jonathan Edwards.

Kant can say it again. Modern America is in a state of enlightenment but is not an enlightened state. But even if Professor Gay accepted such pessimistic theories, they would not shake his belief in the righteousness and rightness of the Enlightenment or in the liberating force of an historiography that is totally opposed to the identification of enlightenment with the New England or even the American Way.

Emasculating History

On Mazlish's "Riddle" — By ALASDAIR MACINTYRE

IT USED to be the fashion to denigrate traditional speculative philosophy by labelling it metaphysical and nonsensical. It is now the fashion to denigrate it by patronising it. The speculative philosophers are carefully put in their places; their "insights" are extracted and praised in measured terms; but the terms in which they are praised and understood are our terms and not theirs. That is to say, they are not understood historically. When it is speculative philosophy of history that is under discussion, the failure to understand it historically is even more dangerous than it usually is. For the lack of an historical dimension in our understanding marks a fundamental alienation of the commentator from his subject-matter. Such an alienation is the outstanding feature of Professor Bruce Mazlish's new book.[1]

What do I mean by speaking of the presence or absence of an historical dimension in our understanding and what does an accusation of ignoring it amount to? First and most importantly, there is Collingwood's point that we only understand an author if we understand to what questions his writings are intended to supply answers; and Collingwood's further point that the history of philosophy is not a sequence of writers offering rival answers to the same questions, but of writers answering different questions. Philosophical progress indeed consists in reformulating the questions as much as in answering them. Secondly, however, since philosophy is an enquiry into the character of our concepts, the history of philosophy is unintelligible apart from the history of those concepts, and that history has its setting in the history of the forms of human social life. These three histories are not wholly distinct nor to be assimilated to each other, nor even connected according to a single pattern. But to ignore their character and their interconnection—as those who turn their backs on Vico and Hegel, Marx and Collingwood will be all too apt to do—will be to fall into the trap in which most modern moral philosophy is caught, whether continental and phenomenological or Anglo-Saxon and analytic. This is the trap of enquiring what the nature and structure of moral concepts may be without enquiring *whose* moral concepts from *what* culture and *what* society we are scrutinising.

The consequence is not merely that moral concepts are treated as unhistorical and timeless in their being but that the contingent, historically shaped features of *our* moral scheme are presented as the necessary, eternal features of morality as such. We then acknowledge as morality in the past only what accords with our scheme. One might have expected, however, that this Procrustean vision would be absent in the more explicitly historical parts of philosophy and the philosophy of history. And one might also have expected that an historian of the philosophy of history, such as Mazlish, who writes precisely about those authors from Vico to Collingwood who made the notion of historical understanding central to their thought would not have been ensnared by it. But not so. Mazlish's flat, scissors-and-paste narrative omits precisely that which makes some of the authors about whom he writes so important.

I say *some* of these authors advisedly. For con-

[1] *The Riddle of History*. By BRUCE MAZLISH. Harper and Row, New York, $8.00; London, 64s.

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sider Mazlish's mixed bag: not only Vico, Condorcet, Hegel, Comte and Marx, but also Voltaire, Kant, Spengler, Toynbee and Freud. The second group is classified with the first because all are taken to have been answering the same questions and to be providing either rival or complementary answers. Moreover, their thought is treated only in so far as it is somehow relevant to these questions. This leads to absurdity. Kant's work on history, which Mazlish acknowledges to be peripheral to Kant's philosophy, is accorded full treatment, while Kant's epistemology receives only side glances. Hegel's philosophy of history cannot be presented therefore in its proper relationship to Kant's epistemology. This complaint is not mere pedantry. Hegel's own difficulties and dilemmas, not to speak of Marx's, spring from his inability to think through adequately the problems he set himself, and these are problems derived from his study of Kant's epistomology. Consider two of these problems and two that are closely related to each other.

Hegel, as Mazlish notices without recognising the importance of what he notices, abolished the Kantian dualism which distinguishes reality-as--it-is-grasped by-our-concepts from reality-as-it-is-in-itself. There is, says Hegel, no reality beyond the-reality-grasped-by-our-concepts. The source of the Kantian dualism lay in a conception of reality as neutral, objective, and distinct from all our beliefs and concepts, something out there with which we can compare (as we might compare a picture with that of which it is a picture) our beliefs and concepts to discover their truth or falsity, adequacy or inadequacy. But if the notion of such a reality is a fiction, if each conceptual scheme carries within it its own criterion of the real, if our beliefs and concepts are partially constitutive of reality, then how are we to judge between rival and alternative conceptual schemes?

Hegel's second problem arises from his grasp of the historicity of conceptual schemes and philosophical theories. If all such theories and schemes belong in some sense or other to some particular age, some particular form of social life, must not this also be true of our own theories and concepts? And does it not seem to follow from this that the search after truth is a will-o'-the-wisp?

Hegel's answer to these two problems is effectively that his own age provides an absolute standpoint, the standpoint embodied in his own philosophy, from which the relativities of the rest of history can be viewed. It is this that leads Hegel to say that in writing down the thoughts of the *Logic* he is uttering the thoughts of God. The arrogance of this self-deification is less philosophically irritating than its arbitrariness.

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But it is unintelligible why Hegel should have thought like this at all unless we understand the problems posed by his own insights. In Mazlish's narrative it remains unintelligible.

Mazlish's misunderstandings of Marx are even more radical. He portrays Marx as unwittingly synthesising Hegel and Comte. The synthesis has to be unwitting because of Marx's open scorn for Comte. But nonetheless Marx shared Comte's beliefs "that thought itself develops along with the material world thought about" and "that social relations exist independent of men's will, and, as such, are subject to invariant laws" and he also shared Comte's belief that metaphysics was being ousted by positive science. Mazlish, of course, agrees that we "must not gloss over the really major differences between Comte and Marx"; he simply does not seem to see that the propositions which he ascribes to both thinkers he is only able to do so by divorcing them from the quite specific and quite different meanings which they had for each thinker. Using Mazlish's criteria the discovery of resemblances between contemporary thinkers becomes a game for any number of players.

I SUSPECT THAT once again Mazlish has disabled himself by trying to explain what Marx said without having understood the question that Marx was trying to answer. In place of this we are given what Mazlish acknowledges to be a tentative approach to Marx's "personal psychological processes" by way of an analysis of the dominant imagery in his writings. Here Mazlish seems to think that by pointing out a difficulty he has overcome it. For he warns us that if Marx speaks in terms of breaking fetters and loosing chains, for example, "it may be a reflection of his own fear of dependency, but it is as likely to be a philosophical concept borrowed from Hegel, and before him, perhaps from Epicurus." But he then takes no account of his own salutary warning and proceeds to talk nonsense boldly. For he never investigates how far Marx's images are commonplaces shared by other writers; and he ignores what we know very well about Marx's character.

Consider, for example, the family joke about Marx's appearance which led to him being called "Old Nick" or "the Moor" at home. Mazlish can write:

> Then there are his relations with Engels, the lifelong friend who addressed him in many of the letters as "Dear Moor"—did he have in mind the dark Othello, who had married the fair Desdemona?

This is wild, as is what Mazlish goes on to say:

> And what of Marx's carbuncles, headaches and other illnesses? Were they, like Darwin's somewhat similar symptoms, protections against society's intrusion on the creative thinker?

Here one piece of psycho-analytic mythology is being used to breed another. Darwin's symptoms seem certainly—as far as at this remove in time anything can be certain in such matters—to have been the consequence of Chagas' Disease caught when he was in South America and not to have been psychologically caused at all. For Mazlish to rely on an already refuted speculation about Darwin to speculate similarly about Marx is no doubt only possible because Mazlish treats psycho-analytic theorising as a securely established discipline, acceptable in the light of the canons of natural science. This extraordinary belief underpins Mazlish's chapter on Freud and perhaps helps to explain why Freud is included in his book at all.

These criticisms of particular aspects of Mazlish's book are, however, unimportant compared with the lack of perspective which his psychologising and his own failures of historical understanding bring about. That lack, in turn, may explain why Mazlish omits to notice altogether the most important of the heirs of classical philosophy of history. He notices the developments in conceptual analysis brought about by modern critical philosophy of history. He even discusses Spengler and Toynbee respectfully. But he nowhere sees how it is in modern sociological theory that the questions which were critical for the speculative philosophy of history have found a new life.

The key book here is Talcott Parsons' *The Structure of Social Action*. The common accusation that Parsons' work is anti-historical, that Parsons views social systems in ways which rule out any adequate view of historical change, must make this remark seem odd unless it is amplified. But this accusation holds, if it holds at all, of the Parsons of *The Social System* rather than of the Parsons of *The Structure of Social Action*; and, more importantly, Parsons even perhaps in spite of himself inherits and transmits to contemporary sociological theory what was the key question of classical philosophy of history. "Men make their own history, but not just as they please" (Marx). The relationships between human purpose and agency and those larger structures which although formed and informed by such purpose and agency have a life of their own and impose constraints both felt and unfelt upon how men live constitute the central problem which the modern discipline inherited from the older one. It is a final indictment of Mazlish's book that in it this passes unnoticed.

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Fantasies of War

Voices Prophesying War 1763–1984. By I. F. Clarke. *Oxford*, 42s.

In May 1918, King George VI, fighting at the head of his own troops, inflicted a crushing defeat on a numerically much superior Russian army at the gates of Vienna. This piece of pseudo-history, which has all the exact inaccuracy of a dream, might seem to be the result of playing fold-in tricks, in the manner of William Burroughs, with a text-book of 20th-century history. It is, in fact, a summary of part of a book called *The Reign of George VI, 1900–1925*, published in 1763, which is the first of the many exhibits in Mr. Clarke's fascinating history of imaginary future wars. The anonymous author made a remarkably good guess when he placed the end of his Patriot King's reign only eleven years before the real George VI came to the throne; but he betrays no hint at all of the obsession with technological advance that characterises so many later writers in this genre. For him the battles of the early 20th century would be in no way different from those of the 18th. It was creditable of Mr. Clarke to have unearthed this curiosity, though it seems to have been an isolated specimen, and the next notable examples are the fantasies which flourished on both sides of the channel when Napoleon was threatening to invade Britain: the English writers manifested anxiety and defiance, while the French entertained dreams of a gloriously successful invasion, assisted by such up-to-date methods as troop-carrying balloons and a secretly constructed Channel Tunnel.

But this kind of literature (or sub-literature) doesn't properly establish itself until the 1870s, when an engineer officer, Colonel G. T. Chesney, published *The Battle of Dorking*, a short novel which was prodigiously successful, and provoked innumerable imitations. Chesney's story followed the Franco-Prussian war, and graphically described a successful Prussian invasion of southern England; its intention was to alert the nation to foreign dangers, and to encourage a greater degree of military preparedness, but there was an additional imaginative element in his work which evidently touched on deep fears about the possible violability of the Motherland. Similar fears were equally apparent in other countries, and books modelled on Chesney's flourished in all the major European powers between 1871 and 1914; this period was the great era of the imaginary war, and Mr. Clarke, who is widely read in French, German, and Italian examples as well as in English and American material, is admirably informative about all its many manifestations. He stresses

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the complex nature of the form: at its most sober, it was merely a writing-up of a theoretical strategic possibility. As Mr. Clarke puts it: "Add the methods of the realistic narrative to the practice of the military assessment and the product is a full-scale story of imaginary warfare." To this was often added a desire to speculate on new and untried technological developments, particularly in the naval sphere, where the dreadnought, which represented spectacular advances in design, armour, and weaponry, had never been seen in action (and wasn't to be until Jutland). Furthermore, many of the stories reflected quite closely the instabilities and yearly vicissitudes of the international political scene; thus, before the early 1900s, France was seen as England's major enemy and most probable invader (the periodically mooted Channel Tunnel was regarded as a fearful risk), and this sentiment was reciprocated by the French. They were also anti-German, but Mr. Clarke interestingly shows that whereas the books about *la revanche* had sober descriptive titles such as *La Guerre franco-allemande de 1878* or *La Guerre prochaine entre la France et L'Allemagne*, the anti-British ones had strongly emotive names like *Mort aux Anglais* and *L'Agonie d'Albion*. It seems that the former were written by army officers, and the latter by civilians. All this changed in the early 1900s, following the *Entente Cordiale* and the rise of German imperialism; then Germany became the major menace, as in *The Riddle of the Sands*, one of the few examples of this fiction that is still read.

YET IN A FEW BOOKS imaginative and mythic elements predominated over simple political and military considerations, and gave the works something of the permanence of literature. The most notable example is H. G. Wells' *The War of the Worlds*, which Mr. Clarke justly describes as "still the most remarkable fantasy of imaginary warfare that has so far appeared in the history of the genre"; this work points forward directly to the apocalyptic works of recent science fiction referred to in the last part of his book. If I have a criticism of Mr. Clarke, it is that he has been too little disposed to follow up the more deeply speculative aspects of his subject, and has stayed too close to simple history; there are, for instance, elements in the cult of the imaginary war akin to those discussed in C. G. Jung's book on flying saucers. In one sense the imaginary war is a manifestation of traditional fears of the apocalypse, with its accompanying images of warriors in the sky and so forth; images which were given a vivid new charge by Arthur Machen in his very influential *The Bowmen* of 1915.

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Mr. Clarke tries to bring his study up to date by writing about recent manifestations, where the imaginary war is usually nuclear and merges readily into apocalyptic fantasies. Here, I think, he is less satisfactory, and has tried to embrace too much, for it is hard to see such works as *Nineteen Eighty-Four*, *Ape and Essence*, and the novels of John Wyndham as in any meaningful sense belonging to the same clearly defined and limited genre as the books of 1871–1914. Reality has caught up with science fiction, and the kind of detached curiosity that produced the "classical" examples of the genre now seems inaccessible; our anxieties are no longer secret, but all too blatant and consuming. Nevertheless, if one were to conceive of the possibility of writing about possible wars in a non-apocalyptic fashion, then the contemporary world would offer some choice opportunities for treatment in the earlier vein. Like, for example, *An account of the joint Russian-American airborne mission to take out the Chinese nuclear installations*, or *The Battle of the Gobi Desert 197–: How Russia and China Went to War*. Or, to come closer to our own doorstep, *The Great Race War*, including stirring accounts of the advance of a Nigerian armoured column into the burning ruins of Salisbury, or the brilliant flight of the Egyptian air force pilot who dropped a Chinese H-bomb on Johannesburg. But no, I don't feel like inventing any more examples (I offer these free to anyone who has the nerve to use them). We are, indeed, less tough-minded and less innocent than the excited compatriots of Colonel Chesney.

Bernard Bergonzi

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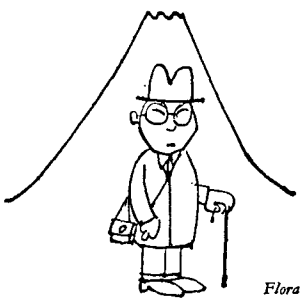
POINTS OF THE COMPASS

Letter from Japan

The Most Extraordinary Country



Flora

IT IS dangerous, they say, for any writer to stay more than a fortnight in Japan: he unfailingly writes a book about it. What is the nature of this temptation? Other countries offer similar temptations: Israel, Cuba, or Viet Nam. Taken up with their own uniqueness, they infect the traveller: he must tell the world about them. But why Japan? Israel is a new country; so is Fidel's Cuba; Viet Nam is topical. But Japan is not a new country; it is as old as the hills and as immutable—or so it would seem. True, not all the girls wear *kimonos* now—they are not too practical for factory and office—but they seem as sweetly submissive as ever. Here, in Tokyo, the G.I. comes to lick his wounds: the wounds of Viet Nam, and the wounds of the American way of love. Old hands assure you much has changed over the past twenty years. Workers may still be expected to bow to the shrine of the Founder, as girls must bow to the males of the family, from grandfather down to baby brother in his diapers. But deference is no longer all: there are new areas of choice and, anxiety-making as such things are, these new areas are being explored. The older generation assure you that the young are not as they were—which is true, and probably for the good.

Yet the Western traveller, who has read that Japan is the most "westernised" country in Asia, is in for a shock. "Westernised"? Vague enough. Do tons of ingot steel, precision engineering, electronics make a country Western? Then Japan is Western, more Western than much of Europe, and more Western, in important respects, than Britain. Yet somebody travelling through Asia today—from Delhi to Kuala Lumpur, from Bangkok to Manila—might well conclude that Japan was Asia's *least* westernised country. A woman Prime Minister may be acceptable to Indians and Ceylonese; but who can imagine a woman Prime Minister of Japan? Of course, Japan's backwardness (if we call it that) is a great part of its attraction—to today's G.I. as to Lafcadio Hearn half a century ago. Even then, Hearn was writing despondently of younger Japanese that "they are beginning to respect their wives more than their fathers and mothers." Deplorable! Yet the Western (male) traveller cannot but have mixed feelings: how nice, how very nice to be fanned, and coddled, and flattered with such professionally exquisite charm! Tempting indeed, in such moments, to soft-pedal the benefits of progress, Western-style! Unique Japan, Eden of cherry blossom and sex-without-guilt, transistorised lotus-land: you are the most extraordinary country.

SHE KNOWS IT, and is proud of it. Indeed, so proud of it that a doubt arises in the mind of the traveller—particularly, perhaps, in that of the British traveller. He has heard it all before. Isn't this how the English—another island race, as Japanese never fail to point out—picture themselves? Unique, baffling, contradictory! At once conceited and self-depreciating, indolent and energetic, stolid and ingenious: a complex race. No wonder the English pity the foreigner who tries to understand them. For the truth lies in the blood, and in the nuances; yet from the former the foreigner is excluded by birth, and the nuances he will never catch. Nature and nurture thus against him, the poor fellow is wasting his time. Still, granted this is how matters stand, why should it please us so much? Among civilised men it is a pleasure to be understood. Why, then, this perverse pleasure in being misunderstood, in remaining inviolable and opaque? There is something strange about it, and inconsistent. If they were properly incomprehensible, the English could not expect foreigners to revere and imitate their institutions, their fashions and foibles. Yet Englishmen seem to expect this very thing. English values are not just a matter for the English; others, too, can profit by them. So thought the imperialist Victorians; so thinks the anti-imperialist Left today.

Of course, in England the conflict was never articulated in quite these terms—that would have been un-English. But in Japan it was. Why should the rest of the world—not only the "Greater East Asian Co-prosperity Sphere"—be expected to follow the Way of the Emperor, when both Empire and Way were so uniquely a product of the *Japanese* spirit? True, China

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had had her Emperors and her Ways. But the Chinese Emperor had been a secular rather than a sacred figure; and the Ways of Confucius, Lao Tse, or Gautama Buddha made an appeal that the hastily constructed State Shintoism of the Meiji Emperors could not hope to make. Shintoism taught the schoolboys of Japan that their Emperor, descendant of the Sun Goddess, was unique, as Nippon herself was unique. Other nations have fed on a similar diet: *sinn fein, nosotros solos, irgun zwei leumi.* Others, again, have put up with the milder, not unreasonable, notion that there was nobody quite like them. But for two generations Japanese schoolboys were taught that there was nobody like them at all. Psychologically, the insistence is not hard to explain. The world admired Japan's achievements, yet it thought Japan imitative and uncreative. The Japanese thought so too (doing themselves, probably, something of an injustice). If nationalism could not be safely grounded in technical advancement, it must be grounded in something by definition inimitable; and this State Shintoism was. But this formula, though it supplied the spiritual needs of the ambitious, but self-contained Japan of the early Meiji period, was plainly less appropriate to the neo-imperialist Japan of the next generation.

> Towards China [wrote a Japanese General of the inter-war period] Japan's task is to act like an elder brother, chastising a younger brother to teach him the way of virtue: what we do in China, harsh as it may seem, is done from love.

Alas, younger brothers do not always take their correction in the right spirit—especially when, as in this case, the "younger" had been prone to consider himself (with some justice) the elder. Yet the Japanese militarists never saw the inappropriateness of this ideology to their self-appointed task. The Germans made a catastrophic (though probably not decisive) mistake in neglecting to win the anti-Stalinist peoples of Russia to their cause. Their Japanese allies were scarcely less ham-handed in working the potentially fruitful field of Asian nationalism.

How RELEVANT is this to the problem—essentially a problem of orientation—confronting Japan today? From what Japanese friends tell me I would hazard it is very relevant indeed. "Orientation"! There ought to be a more appropriate word for Japan's problem—occidentation, perhaps. That is the problem: how do you *occidentate* yourself when you have been isolated from the world for the best part of your national history? The need to occidentate is literal enough: there is nobody to your East. Historically, your world bears little resemblance to the world known to the European. There is China, Korea, and the barely civilised peoples to the South-East. Beyond that there is India, the land of the Buddha—yet this already more remote and mythical than were the lands of the Bible to the European. Then, later, the Europeans themselves: bearded, uncouth, strangely knowledgeable barbarians, the focus of dread and admiration. Easterners or Westerners? It must all have been very confusing to this easternmost of peoples, children of the Rising Sun. The Spaniards had come to Japan from the unknown East, the empty Pacific, like Mexico's Quetzalcoatl; the Portuguese and the Dutch had come from the Indies, the fabulous South West. Still, one thing was clear: if Japan were to shine, it would be by reflected light. Orientation or occidentation: undeniably, the truth did not lie in Nippon, it had to be fetched from beyond the seas. No wonder the Japanese yearned after some countervailing truth inherent in the unique, mysterious destiny of Nippon.

No wonder, too, we foreigners fall victim to the temptation to psychologise Japan—from Lafcadio Hearn to Ruth Benedict. True, we would not write now that the latter-day Japanese are betraying their heritage in preferring their wives to their parents. Western Japanophiles have moved a good way since then. Not everything traditional is thought good; not everything new is condemned. But the fascination remains, for nowhere to the casual eye is the dichotomy between new and old so striking. Admittedly, the eye is not always a good guide. The humble, file-clutching clerk, scurrying home to adoring and deferential wife and children, to his honourable Japanese bath (*o furo*) and mattress on the *tatami*, might seem to the Westerner to suffer from chronic cultural schizophrenia. His meals are taken in the family's "western-style" dining-room. The files he brings home with him—Japanese life is ridden by obligations never to be discharged—are pored over in a "western-style" study—a replica, as near as possible, of the office he has left. Inevitably, what strikes the Westerner (it is an observation he could equally make in Siam or India) is how unsure the Japanese hand and eye, so skilled at flower-arrangement (indeed in all matters ancient and ceremonious) can be when *occidentation* is required of them. Where workmanship and quality are concerned the old jibes no longer carry conviction: Japanese goods are not shoddy, nor are they the product of sweated labour. But it is not, I think, mere Hearn-romanticism that makes the Westerner weep for the heavy-footed, mahogany-veneered monsters that populate his friends' "western-style" drawing-rooms. The unsureness of touch is undeniable. What, then, of Modern Japanese Design, much admired in the West?

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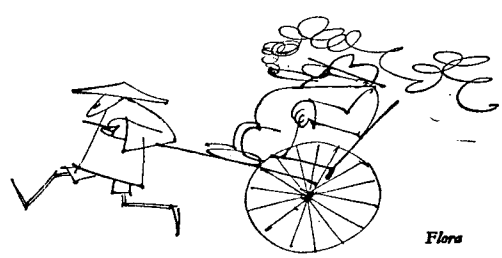
Well, it exists: but it is found as often—or rather, as rarely—as good design anywhere.[1]

SUCH THEN, are some of the pitfalls of occidentation, Japanese-style. Of course, to say Japanese are happy to live within their inherited bounds would be rash—smacking of Hearn's Heresy. Nobody has ever called the Japanese a *happy* people—though it is true no people enjoys its self-inflicted miseries with such abandon. Indeed, it is just this propensity for making life as difficult as possible that their admirers have praised in the Japanese. Happiness is for the decadent West; Japanese are born to higher things. Still, happy or unhappy, once removed from the protective shell of their own culture the Japanese seem to flounder. This need not mean—here the casual eye misleads—that our clerk is a Two-Culture schizophrenic. Professor Edwin Reischauer—until recently America's Ambassador to Japan—argues that this amalgam is really no stranger, indeed is as unselfconscious, as our Anglo-Saxon amalgam of "Arabic" numerals, Greek geometry, and Germanic syntax. To the outsider the elements seem disparate and contradictory: to the man inside it is a continuum. Some Japanese habits may at first seem odd, even not quite nice, to the greenhorn from the West. That honourable Japanese bath, where you lie and wallow to your heart's content, relishing the piping hot water and the unaccustomed, rough touch of the wood—it is an exercise in hedonism not to be missed. Needless to say, you must not actually *wash*—unless you wish to advertise your western barbarity. You wash *before* and you bathe *after* and—that is, if you are Japanese—you know your proper place in the ceremony. Father dips first, then the rest of the family in due order (and the same water), down to the youngest of female siblings and the servant-maid. What to the Westerner seems unwonted intimacy in things of the flesh—"mixed bathing" with a vengeance—turns out to be a ritual in which nobody comes to harm, and pleasure is had by all. Why, then, should the Japanese give up *o furo* for that frigid, functional, metallic horror, the western-style bath? Are the Japanese less proficient at electronics because they cling to this unspartan ritual?

THE DIVIDING LINE does not always fall where the Westerner thinks it falls, but it exists. Invisible the line may be; but the westerner is continually being reminded of its presence. The Japanese, leaving the protective cocoon of tradition, shows remarkable unsureness. Conscious of this, the Japanese is careful, when venturing into the frosty occidental air, to leave open a way of retreat. As it happens, nature and language provide him with the perfect retreat. No people in the world speaks a language (for all that it is written in characters borrowed from the Chinese) remotely akin to Japanese: in this respect Japan is truly unique. Again, his century-long insularity has given the Japanese the most homogeneous national culture in the world. And how many foreigners speak Japanese? A few thousand, maybe—considering the importance of Japan on the world scene, her economic power, her vigorous artistic life, surely a shamefully small number. The truth is, the language and the script, with its 4,000-odd characters, form an insurmountable barrier. A Japanese friend told me of a tour he had made with an American scholar in a remote part of Hokkaido. They had stopped in a village to ask the way, and the locals gathered round. Something altogether out of the order of nature occurred: the American spoke and the sounds that came forth were *Japanese*. The crowd burst into laughter. Crestfallen, the American asked sheepishly what gaffe he had committed. Oh no, his friend assured him, he had committed no gaffe: it was just that the idea of a foreigner speaking Japanese seemed very funny.



Flora

SUCH TRAVELLERS' TALES have their relevance to the political problem of contemporary Japan. Is it not strange that so virulently nationalistic a country—to judge from its wartime record—should have settled for a degree of protection by a foreign power that most other nations would reject with indignation? There is a parallel: West Germany was in a not dissimilar mood in the early '50s. But *ohne mich* was a passing slogan; and it yielded, not to a new nationalism (as many had feared), but to a sober acceptance of the need for military and political integration with the West. Notoriously, nothing of this sort has happened in Japan. For all practical purposes, to be sure, Japan is

[1] If you doubt this, make the tour of one of Tokyo's famous department stores. If, like myself, you were brought up on the work of that great English Japanophile, the potter Bernard Leach, you would be well-advised to keep away from the ceramics section.

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integrated into the Western system: her great industrial potential, to put it at its lowest, is "denied to the enemy." But inwardly, as the foreigner becomes aware, Japan is still very much in her *ohne mich* phase. She is quite as non-aligned as was India in the heyday of Nehruism. And it is public sentiment, not *raison d'état*, that is the key factor. In Germany, Adenauer's coalition of the Centre-Right could force through rearmament because fear of communism outweighed the pacifist-isolationist mood of the post-war years. In Japan, a similar coalition of forces came into being, reducing the opposition socialists to an impotence greater than that of the S.P.D. But the hidden influence of the opposition—at least over foreign policy—remains very great. The government, despite its majority in the country, is not willing to risk public disfavour by committing Japan to a formal alignment with the West. In the past couple of years, it is true, the Chinese nuclear explosions have made an impression. There are now many highly-placed Japanese who argue—as many similarly-placed Indians argue—that some kind of response to this challenge must be considered. But whereas in India—so have times changed—public sentiment would probably go along with such a policy, in Japan it would need a government set on *harakiri* to propose it. This is the latest of the Japanese paradoxes: few countries can boast so entrenched, so apparently invulnerable a régime of the Conservative Right—yet few conservative régimes can have been so dominated by fear of popular displeasure.

To a degree, of course, all this is a posthumous victory for "democracy," MacArthur-style; and the West should be duly grateful. But why the Japanese should have clung to the *ohne mich* outlook of the post-war years is less easy to answer. Was there no threat to Japan, comparable to the threat posed by Soviet power in East Germany? Plainly, there was: the combined power of the Soviet Union and of a resurgent China on the mainland of Asia was formidable indeed. Never before had Japan been placed in direct proximity to land-power on such a scale. The Korean war, fought within a few hundred miles of the sacred territory of Nippon, had shown what this combination could mean. There was no doubt that behind America's determination to prevent a communist take-over in South Korea lay a larger, longer-term interest in preventing the loss of Japan to this Asian super-alliance. Yet the war's uncomfortable proximity did not have the effect on public sentiment one might suppose. The average Japanese may have been intellectually aware of these changes but he did not *feel* threatened—and with reason. As long as the naval power of the Communist giants was minimal, and Japan could shelter under the American nuclear umbrella, the principle of the Elephant and the Whale applied: the lords of the land and of the sea were mutually invulnerable. Now the invulnerability of Nippon—every schoolboy learns of the *kamikaze*, the divine wind that scattered the ships of the Mongols and saved Nippon—is part of the Japanese national mystique. True, this invulnerability was now guaranteed by a foreign, barbarian power. But it was invulnerability all the same. Meanwhile MacArthur, last of the *Shoguns*, in promising his protection to the people of Japan, had decreed her one of the most pacific Constitutions ever devised. The Japanese do not take such things lightly: MacArthur's Constitution became a sacred cow. From being the most passionately xenophobe and militarist of nations, the Japanese became overnight a nation of shopkeepers.

How do we explain it? Only, surely, by taking into account the peculiar nature of Japanese national feeling. There is that sense of uniqueness, familiar to the English, that predates the rise of modern nationalism. Both British and Japanese prided themselves on their unknowability, the opaqueness of their cultural identity. But the Japanese went a stage further. Adamant as to their own incomprehensibility, they readily assumed the comprehensibility of foreign cultures. This the Englishman did not do. He was prepared to extend the same privilege of non-comprehensibility he claimed for himself to lesser breeds. The French he found incomprehensible, the Germans still more so; as for the Russians, they were indeed "a mystery wrapped in an enigma." But he never expected them to be anything else. What surprises the foreigner in Japan is that so defensive an attitude about Japanese culture should co-exist with so over-confident an approach towards his own. Japanese relations with the world resemble a two-way mirror: they know what you're up to; you don't know what they're up to. It is all right for Japan to borrow from German jurisprudence, French military science, or English political economy (as she did freely after the Meiji restoration of 1868). In each case Japan was borrowing from the most advanced model available, as underdeveloped nations do today. And very sensible too, one might say—if it did not strike the European that much of what was borrowed was not mutually compatible and not well-suited to Japanese conditions. But it is seldom you find a Japanese who is uneasy about this two-way process, though it has always been easy to find Japanese who wished to resist it altogether. The West was a treasure-house to be

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plundered for such wisdom as it might have to offer (an interesting reversal, incidentally, of historical attitudes). The East is inviolable, on the other hand: either she knows it all already (as did traditional China), or she has the capacity to absorb the superficies of foreign cultures, while disregarding cavalierly—to the Western eye—the assumptions on which those cultures are based.

BUT, OF COURSE, there is an uneasiness at the heart of this argument. It is irrational to claim insight into foreign cultures while denying foreigners insight into one's own. True, Japanese is a "difficult" language. But English, French and German are, in the same degree, "difficult" languages for the Japanese. If there are few Japanese-speakers in Europe, and many English-, French- and German-speakers in Japan, that is a measure of the relative utility of these languages, not of their difficulty. The suspicion is aroused that behind this Japanese shyness—and very attractive it can be—there lurks a desire not to be found out. A Japanese like the writer Yukio Mishima is therefore likely to be on his guard against Japanese "politeness," and attempt to warn foreigners off it. ("You want to know how life's *really* lived in this country? Believe me, if they thought you wanted to know that, and you showed persistence, you'd find every door closed against you.") But the other face of this introverted mentality—that aggressive, over-confident intellectual intrusion into regions where Europeans might fear to tread—is no less striking. Many Japanese "know about" Gothic Architecture, or Romantic Poetry, or Modern Art; but it is often a curiously dry, deracinated book-knowledge. It is not something lived, it is something handed down by the *sensei* from the lecturer's platform. Of course, Europe is far away; and few Japanese intellectuals can afford to travel. But it is difficult to avoid the impression that a thing is often believed simply because some celebrated *sensei* —or maybe some visiting foreigner—has said it was so. The dictum, once delivered, is handed down from generation to generation, and takes on an unquestionable existence of its own. I am told that an anxious topic of conversation among Japanese officers in the summer of 1941 was the possibility that Nazi Germany might rob Japan of Sakhalin. True, the Germans were not at Moscow yet; but who could tell? Many Japanese military men had imbibed the notion of the superiority of Prussian arms with their mother's milk. The Russian hordes would not be able to stop them. Sakhalin, fruit of the war of 1904 against Russia, was therefore in danger.

At first sight, the dreamy unrealism of this might seem inconsistent with Japan's reputation for "ruthless efficiency." But there was something of it in that most catastrophic of all Japanese political adventures, the attack on Pearl Harbour. If you ask today why Japan did it, the response is a sad shrug of the shoulders, as much as to say: "What do you expect? Are we not a nation of dreamers?" Did nobody, one asks, foresee that the attack on Pearl Harbour, even if an operational success, could not fail to mobilise the resources of the most powerful nation on earth against Japan? From the documents, of course, we know that there was indeed dissension in high places, that no coherent plan existed, that Japan "drifted into war" against the open or muted opposition of many of her military and political leaders. We know, too, that many of the professional students of foreign opinion—the officials of the Foreign Ministry, for example—had warned against the enterprise; whereas the militant interventionists —the free-wheeling ginger-groups of the extreme right—were those most ignorant of the outside world. For all that, the attack took place, and it could not have taken place had not a certain *folie de grandeur* taken hold, not only of the ruling groups, but of the nation as a whole. Was America not far too strong—in steel, in oil, in overall war-making capacity? Was not Japan, so dependent on overseas trade, so poorly endowed with mineral resources, uniquely vulnerable? The militants were aware of the facts; but they were sure that Japanese "spirit" would prove a match for the brute material strength of the United States. Chauvinistic claptrap, no doubt: but Japan's provocation was the end-result of a long series of historical misjudgments, rooted in the over-confidence of the post-Meiji era.

Flora

IT WAS, I think, about the tenth day of my stay in Japan that I was challenged by my charming girl-guide with "Well, *are* you going to write a book about us or *aren't* you?" I'd been sorely tempted, I told her, for Nippon had cast her spell upon me. But it seemed, somehow, both too early and too late. Too early, because one had been cowed by the density and opacity of things Japanese. Too late, because one already knew enough—to know one would never know enough, A defeatist view, certainly, but calculated to keep one out of temptation's way. My guide's response taught me as much about Japan, perhaps, as one can hope to learn

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this side of a lifetime's study. "You're wise! you've learnt the basic lesson: that with us Japanese you can't hope to win. If you write, of course we shall laugh behind our hands, and call you an ignoramus. If you don't write, we shall feel sorry for ourselves, and say: 'Why don't they take more notice of us, don't they *want* to understand?' And then, when we have wept a little (for we are a sentimental people), we shall say: 'It is after all for the best, for how could he have understood?' Our equanimity will be restored." Ha! Formidable, these Japanese young ladies! Meek and ductible, they seem to have the last word. As Lafcadio Hearn's widow remarked to a foreign inquirer (the remark contains the whole innocent wisdom of Japanese womanhood): "Sometimes it seemed to me Lafcadio was mad. You know, sometimes he would see things that were not there...."

Of course, in Japanese politics women do not count: politics are a man's affair. The foregoing might suggest this is not a fair division of labour. What Lafcadio Hearn's widow said of her man might be said by many Japanese women of their men—indeed, one suspects it is increasingly being said. The Japanese do indeed combine a way of seeing things that are not there (like the German invasion of Sakhalin) with a no less remarkable gift for not seeing things that are there (such as the war potential of America in 1941, or the potential power of a nuclear-armed China). Unfair? A little, of course. Japanese are realistic enough where business is concerned; they are not ignorant of America's power today, or of the extent of American influence over their economy. Apparently, then, the Japanese know their place in the world: they have no imperial ambitions, no East-of-Suez problem, no Sterling Area to uphold. They seem to have adjusted well to the post-war scene, as well as Germany or Italy, and better than Britain. To know where Japan stands it is only necessary to look at her trade figures: at the overwhelming importance of her commerce with America, Canada and Australia; and at the smaller, but growing Japanese share in the markets of South-east Asia, the Middle East, and Africa. Japan has become a nation of shopkeepers. There is much talk—but, to cite Mishima again, I believe it is mostly sentimental talk—of China as Japan's "natural hinterland" (in an economic, needless to say, not in a political sense). The Japanese are well aware that their fate is bound up with that of the advanced nations: it is there, and there alone, that she can find markets for her sophisticated goods. That China could provide a useful supplementary outlet is true. But she could no more offer Japan a satisfactory substitute for trade with the West than the Soviet Union could provide West Germany with a substitute for the North American or West European market. In this sense, Japan's position is determined: she has no choice but to cast in her lot with the West. Her love for the West may be cupboard love; it is no less strongly motivated for that.

STILL, THERE IS A flaw in the argument. The informed or incautious foreigners who wrote books about Japan were not always of one mind: but they agreed that the Japanese were an idealistic race. The Japanese calculus is of bonds and obligations: to people brought up on the legend of the "Forty-Seven Ronin"—loyal to their feudal master unto death—how could the pursuit of happiness seem other than shallow? The Japanese were a people that strained after deeper things. The ambiguity of this consensus is more apparent to us than to Japan's *fin de siècle* admirers. To say that the Japanese are idealistic is not wrong: they forgot to add that "idealism" is not always an attractive thing. The sense of mutual obligation that made the Japanese self-sacrificing sons and daughters also made the Emperor—so hesitant and humanist by nature—willing to let the militarists get the bit between their teeth, and made possible the *kamikaze* suicide-raids of the Pacific War. Were the ideals therefore unsound? Not necessarily. The true point—it was the point in Germany too—was that traditional values had been manipulated by men whose conduct, even by the light of those values, was inadmissible. But it did not follow in Japan, any more than in Germany, that because bad men manipulated the ideals, the idealism itself was necessarily bad. Under a different dispensation it might serve different ends—even, perhaps, "democracy." Something of this sort, after all, appears to have happened in West Germany. And in Japan? There, too, underlying conservatism, the sense of self-discipline and mutual obligation, finds political reflection in the continued hold of the Liberal Democratic Party. But whereas in Germany the need to harness national energies to some new cause took the all-too-obvious, self-exculpatory form of fierce anti-communist militancy, Japan shows no comparable phenomenon. The Japanese do not love Communism; but they do not fear it either. It is no part of their world-mission to foster it or to contain it. Japanese idealism is diminished, though hardly dead; nowadays they keep it to themselves.

WILL THAT ALWAYS be the case? Scepticism on this score is not confined to foreigners; it is detectable in most of the political talk the foreigner hears in Japan. Japan is still an ambitious country: not for nothing does the

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Soka Gakkai[2] claim its religious mission, which to many foreigners seems suspiciously nationalistic, is in its essence supra-national. But then Japan has always been ambitious, if I am right, not simply to *emulate* the rest of the world, but to offer to the world something of her own felt uniqueness. It may be there is an unresolvable conflict here. But it is clear that transistor radios will not do the trick. What has Japan to offer, what role is the world waiting for her to fill? If the answer is not clear, it is for the old reason: because there was always a contradiction at the heart of Japanese nationalism. Much the same contradiction, it might be argued, lay at the heart of German nationalism. A universalist nationalism, like that of the French Revolution, is exportable; mere self-worship, mere self-absorption in the national ego is not. Certainly, contemporary Japan is not without her preceptors, of the left and of the right: there are those who urge her to mediate between North and South, between the developed and undeveloped worlds. There are those, again, who urge her to mediate between East and West, between American-style Capitalism and Chinese-style Communism. To many these roles are attractive, if somewhat vague. To many their vagueness itself is attractive.

Her foreign preceptors, in particular the United States, now urge a new role on Japan: she should play her part in the "containment of China." If this role is unattractive, it is not because it conflicts with her pan-Asian sentiments. In a sense, "containment of China" was exactly what Japan practised for half a century—in the name of pan-Asianism. The objection to this role is that it would force Japan to take sides, to abandon her lucrative stance of being all things to all men. But it is also, perhaps, a too negative role. To protect Japan's territorial integrity it is not now necessary to invoke a second *kamikaze*: the Seventh Fleet will see to that. Yet the things that are "uniquely Japanese"—the elaborate ordering of obligations within the family and the nation, for example—are not more likely to prove attractive to the outside world than they were when Nippon took it upon herself to chastise China as a younger brother. To the M.R.A.-type Buddhism of the *Soka Gakkai* the world, I fear, will prove equally unresponsive. Still, though not always on the surface, Japan's ambitions and anxieties about her role in the world are seldom absent from public debate.

[2] Ivan Morris, "The Challenge of Soka Gakkai," ENCOUNTER, May 1966.

IT MAY BE THAT the foreigner, if he is hot for certainties, will go away unrewarded. So many bold premisses, such vagueness in the upshot! Such skill in argument, so much indifference to its conclusions! Coyness, as a national characteristic, can be charming. But it can also go too far. To the reproving foreigner it can seem altogether introspective, too self-regarding. Still, let the foreigner beware. Japan is not in need of schoolmasters; she has too many already. Coyness invites rape, agreed: but such conquests are also ephemeral. It is the aftermath effect of MacArthur's Conquest—last and not least productive chapter in the Western rape of Asia—that underlies much of the coyness and uncertainty of today. It is a shock that has still to be absorbed. If the West is wise, she will not force Japan's hand. Rather, she will lie low and let brew what is brewing in what is still, without doubt, the world's most extraordinary country.

John Mander

May it please you

How can the small and under-nourished body
Ward off the predatory food provider?
With what small squeak can it reply?
The parry to the blow is an apology.
Down, down the hammering of persistent
potency,
Until the small and unresponsive body
Points its way through the burial box.

Lindy Murray

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LETTERS

The Ways of Sociology

EDWARD SHILS, in disputing my account of the reasons why sociologists are so often accused of jargon [ENCOUNTER, June], writes too well for such a charge to be levelled against himself. But he has, nonetheless, misunderstood my argument. He has detected that its implications are subversive—if sociologists are accused of jargon largely because good sociology is labelled something else, what becomes of sociology as an independent subject? But if I am wrong, it is not, I think, for Professor Shils' reasons.

The point is not whether economics, linguistics, kinship theory, criminology, demography and the rest developed as offshoots of "sociology." Of course they didn't. But the most valuable contributions to the study of social behaviour can all be more naturally classified as belonging to one or other of them (or of the branches of history itself) than to "sociology." To define sociology by reference to what Professors of Sociology do merely raises the question: what *do* they do? And the answer is so wide that, as Professor Shils and I seem to agree, they must count as their colleagues not only Aristotle but also Namier, Rostovtzeff, Malinowski, E. R. Dodds, H. L. A. Hart, Eric Hobsbawm and Richard Hoggart.

My argument was that only the rigorous and specialised social sciences can hope to vindicate their claim to "science" and thereby get away with whatever unsightly technical terms they find useful without being charged by the literati with "jargon." For the rest, the humanities in general will borrow as much from "sociology" as they find useful, as they have already borrowed from Marx and Freud. If the argument suggests that Professors of Sociology are not all engaged in the same one well-founded and autonomous academic discipline, I can only say that despite Professor Shils' counter-claim this does seem to me to be the case.

W. G. RUNCIMAN

London

"Torture"

COULD Mr. John Braine possibly have read the letter to which he sent that queer reply [ENCOUNTER, April and June]? He says, after remarking with some strange intent that the "omissions" in my letter are "significant": "Evidently she doesn't believe that there's any torture in the independent African states"—or in East Europe or Nigeria or Madagascar . . . or Tibet or the Yemen. (What happened Mr. Braine? Did your atlas give out?)

What I wrote, Sir, was: "*No nation, civilised or underdeveloped, seems immune [from torture], no partisans of any ideology.*"

I emphasise these lines now. It seemed to me then that they must prevent the very imputations, along with the adjectives "nasty" and "silly," which Mr. Braine seems so anxious to entertain.

ELLA WINTER

London

What's Wrong with British Medicine?

PROFESSOR HENRY MILLER'S excellent article on the state of medicine in Britain today [ENCOUNTER, April] is marred by his unimaginative remarks about general practice. General practice copes with the majority of illness in the country, only a small proportion of which needs to be referred to hospital. The fact that it does not always cope as well as it should, and that it still remains, as it were, an underdeveloped country of the medical world, is in large part due to the attitude of many clinical teachers. With a few exceptions, students are not presented with general practice as a serious alternative to hospital work. If it is mentioned at all, it is in terms of condescension, pity, or disparagement. Professor Miller tries to sound fair about it, does he not? But his real feelings on the subject come through all too clearly. His brevity in dealing with the field of medicine where most of the work is done would be incredible if one did not realise his real remoteness from the main activity.

He fairly accurately summarised the G.P.'s role as the treatment of minor ailments, the recognition of serious illness, and the domiciliary management of chronic incurable disease; but I question whether this is so dull or unimportant as he seems to suggest.

In the first place, it seems likely that the sum of benefit to the populace from the relief of myriad minor ailments is a very significant contribution.

Secondly, the recognition of serious illness is one of the most important functions of any doctor, and frequently requires great skill. It certainly does not always require referral to hospital for treatment. Are such diseases as *otitis media* and pneumonia no longer serious because modern drugs have rendered them curable? Provided a G.P. has ready access to pathological and radiological investigations, much serious illness comes well within his scope. And here is one of the answers to the problems of G.P.s. Many of them find their work both fascinating and rewarding, and this is particularly true in places where the facilities for investigation are freely available. It is perhaps significant that teaching hospitals are often the last to provide practitioners with access to these departments.

Professor Miller quotes heart operations and "virus hunting" as more desirable alternative occupations with which to entice the medical student. Does the public really want doctors who choose their branch of medicine according to its offer of thrills (his word) and hair-raising procedures? Heart operations are an example of highly skilled and essential procedures, but they are only needed for a very small number of patients. Virus hunting in fact is for the G.P.—at

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least he sees most of the cases, and given the use of a good virus laboratory, can be in at the kill with the master. Here he is a member of a team just as much as the biochemists, radiologists, and the rest.

To be fair, I know how Professor Miller and his colleagues feel. They feel, and I fear rightly, that too much of the work in general practice is sloppy, lacking the control and clear-sighted planning so dear to the scientist. However, his solution—the withdrawal of G.P.s into Polyclinics—I believe to be the wrong one. He admits the loss of the personal element which would ensue, but thinks this a price to be paid for scientific medicine. In the first place, I consider that this loss would be greater and the advantages fewer than he imagines, especially as comparatively few patients really need to be put through the scientific mill, which is apparently to be the alternative to our cottage industry. In the second place, I think it would be quite impractical for the thousands of patients who daily attend their local doctor, to travel distances up to several miles to their nearest Polyclinic, frequently to end up in the wrong department, no doubt.

I prefer the idea of grouping of G.P.s in strategically placed premises, purpose built and adequately staffed (*e.g.*, there should be at least one nurse to every doctor instead of one to 5 or 6 as at present.) General practitioners should be part of a hospital team and have access to hospital beds for overnight stay of patients under investigation and for short-term management of some cases within their scope but with unsuitable home conditions or needing special nursing care. This has been successfully tried in a few places already. Standards should be maintained by close association with specialists, clinical

Past ENCOUNTERS

THE BRITISH POLITICAL SYSTEM *is remarkable among democracies for the strongly hierarchical traits which it has succeeded in keeping: for the administrative class in the Civil Service, representing as it does an aristocracy of talent, has hitherto retained its pre-eminent position under governments of all political colours. To this extent, the British system allows place for the idea that government is a special and rare skill and that, along with other special skills this one must be cultivated and fostered in the national interest. In other words, British democracy has been as successful as it has, largely because it has succeeded in being so undemocratic.*

MAX BELOFF

IT SEEMS TO ME *that the West is now showing the same incomprehension which destroyed British power in India. The economic and the political impact of the West is being felt. What is absent is the proselytising cultural impact which alone can counteract the mental resistance to the extension of Western culture into the non-Western parts of the world. Instead, there is the same uncritical faith in the promotion of economic prosperity and the converting power of* Pecunia Americana *as there was in the maintenance of law and order and the indispensability of* Pax Britannica. *The West ought to, and in my opinion can, think in terms of something higher than effective diplomacy.*

NIRAD C. CHAUDHURI

TO A YOUNG WRITER *of the 1950s the literary scene must seem rather chill and desolate. Several eminent older writers have lapsed into silence. Some leading writers have vanished to America, others have returned to a formal religious orthodoxy, others have concerned themselves mainly with autobiography. Altogether there has been a cult of biography, of the past, of the backward look, but, apart from isolated figures like George Orwell and Dylan Thomas, a striking absence of major creative writing. Thus, to a young writer of today it might well look as if the English modern movement had run its course, as if a heavy black line had been drawn across the literary page, and he and his generation were left groping for the new values of their bewildering time.*

How doubly or trebly hard it must be for a young writer of today to catch the reflection of this age in creative writing, and how swiftly the literary climates of the '20s and '30s have been superseded. Indeed, in the minds of some young writers of the 1950s the most drastic revaluations may already be going on.

That no young post-war iconoclasts have as yet come forward to set up new critical standpoints is more surprising, and argues for a certain lack either of distinction or enterprise. But this is a lack which may of course be rectified at any moment.

T. R. FYVEL

IN THE HISTORY *of human hopes and longings the polar points of* arcadia *and* utopia *meet at some point in the curving universe. Men have always looked past to some golden age or forward to some golden idyll. Two thousand years ago, Antipater of Thessalonica, a Greek poet of Cicero's day, acclaimed the invention of the water wheel as giving freedom to female slaves who ground the corn: "Cease from grinding . . . sleep late, even if the crowing cocks announce the dawn . . . the Nymphs perform the work of your hands . . . turn the heavy concave Nisyrian millstones." And Aristotle predicted that slavery would disappear when looms would weave by themselves, for then the chief workmen would not need helpers, nor masters slaves. And yet work, said Freud, was the chief means of binding an individual to reality. What will happen when not only the worker but work itself is displaced by the machine?*

DANIEL BELL

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meetings, and presentation of cases within the group and so on. In this way we may get the best of both worlds. Group practice, night and week-end rotas do not necessarily take the personal element out of general practice. An adequate appointment system allows patients to see their "own doctor" 90% of the time.

I do not think the loss of a personal physician is inevitable, nor do I consider that the retention of this element in medicine is necessarily incompatible with the trend toward a more scientific approach.

V. TONGE

Chester

IN HIS ARTICLE "In Sickness and in Health" [ENCOUNTER, April] Professor Miller makes some questionable statements. He deplores routine medical check-ups of "corpulent but otherwise healthy business executives" as a waste of valuable medical man-hours. This can hardly be the opinion of Professor W. J. H. Butterfield, of the Department of Medicine at Guy's Hospital. *The Times* (3 April) quotes from his foreword to a handbook just published by the Medical Practitioners' Union. He writes (of conditions such as atherosclerosis, peripheral vascular and coronary disease, varicose veins, haemorrhoids, diabetes) that "these conditions tend to have mild symptoms and can therefore do damage before they are properly appreciated and reported. *Unfortunately, many stoics delay consultation for too long.*" (My italics.)

Anyone who is familiar with the work of the Pioneer Health Centre (see *The Peckham Experiment* Allen & Unwin, 1943) will know that periodical health overhauls were a condition of membership for the 1200 Peckham families who took part in the experiment. Professor Miller's statement—"We know a great deal about disease, but virtually nothing about health. Positive Health especially is a hypochondriacal delusion"—shows ignorance of all the work done at Peckham. Incidentally, it was the Peckham doctors who first pointed out that without regular health checks, the man-in-the-street must virtually be his own diagnostician.

J. COMERFORD

Churt, Surrey

Marx & Darwin

I AM AFRAID that Shlomo Avineri ["From Hoax to Dogma," ENCOUNTER, March] has rather missed the point of the divergence between Marxism and *Social* Darwinism (not *Darwinism*). *Social* Darwinism was a theory developed by *laissez-faire* thinkers on the basis of Darwin's biological theory, and of course is not found anywhere in Darwin's own writings. It lifted the idea of "struggle for existence," which Darwin saw operating on the instinctual and sub-human level, and made it the driving force of social progress. This both Marx and Engels from the first repudiated.

But Marx never repudiated or criticised Darwin's own theory. On the contrary he welcomed it with enthusiasm and spent many months discussing it. He regarded it as providing "a basis in natural science for the class struggle in history." He saw it also as demonstrating the appearance of qualitative changes which give rise to new species and eventually new and higher animal forms by purely natural means, excluding teleological forces or any supernatural agency. He was attempting to show a similar evolutionary process in society.

But on the human level the Darwinian struggle for existence, which leaves out of account man's intelligence, does not operate, since historical change depends on man's technological achievements and the reorganisation of society to bring the structure into line with the higher level of the productive forces. Marx did see, however, that a higher form of social organisation will have a greater survival value than an obsolete one, and that there is an inevitable struggle between the classes representing the more advanced type of organisation and those representing that which is becoming less fitted for its task.

Avineri reminds us that Marx in his letter to Kugelmann of 27 June 1870 repudiates the application of Darwin's biological theories to human affairs, and adds "there is not a hint of all this in Engels." He is mistaken. Engels in his own letter to Lange on 29 March 1865, five years earlier, takes up exactly the same position as Marx when he criticised Lange's views in the Kugelmann letter.

What Marx, and Engels too, objected to in Büchner, Vogt, and Lange, was not their Darwinism, but, firstly, their narrow materialism, which he had always rejected since his earlier criticism of Feuerbach, and secondly, their application of *biological* theories to *human* social development. They had, ever since 1844, strongly criticised Malthus whose theories reflected the competitive theories of the economists. They now, both of them, again criticised this view which really only applied to the animal world.

> "Darwin did not know [wrote Engels] what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind, and especially his fellow countrymen, when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists celebrate as the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the *animal kingdom*."

This was exactly Marx's view. None of Marx's criticism of Lange and the others in any way applies to Darwin's biological theories or to Engels' views. They refer solely to the *social* Darwinism of the economists and the mechanical materialists, which Engels as well as Marx entirely repudiated.

JOHN LEWIS

Morley College, London

JOHN LEWIS seems to be divided against himself on the topic of Marx and Darwin. On the one hand, he says that Marx never "repudiated or criticised" Darwin's own theory. But this is obviously not the case. Surely it is a criticism and repudiation of the methodological premises of Darwin's theory when Marx says in his letter to Engels (quoted by

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me) that Darwin "amuses" him because "it is remarkable how Darwin recognises among beasts and plants his English society with its division of labour, competition, opening up of new markets, 'inventions' and the Malthusian 'struggle for existence.'. . ." (Engels' letter to Lange of 29 March 1865, referred to by Mr. Lewis, is in a distinctly different vein and reflects totally different considerations.)

On the other hand, Mr. Lewis then goes on to maintain (correctly) that Marx felt that Darwin's theory did not operate on the human level. But then how can he maintain that "Marx did see, however, that a higher form of social organisation will have a greater survival value than an obsolete one and that there is an inevitable struggle between the classes representing the more advanced type of organisation and those representing that which is becoming less fitted for its task." Such a statement, had it really been made by Marx, would have made him a Social Darwinist. But Marx never couched his theory of class struggle in such Darwinian terms; and I would like to challenge Mr. Lewis to show me where in the whole corpus of Marx's writings any statement like that is to be found. A quotation from Engels won't do, because this is precisely the point I was trying to make and which Mr. Lewis seems to wish to gloss over. The difficulty with Mr. Lewis' argument is that he identifies Social Darwinism exclusively with individualist *laissez-faire* theories (*e.g.*, Herbert Spencer); but there is also a collectively oriented Social Darwinism, like that of Büchner and Lange (and Lewis), and it was this quasi-socialist Social Darwinism that was criticised by Marx in the letters quoted by me.

Finally, in my short note I wished to point out that the origin of Engels' famous dictum about the analogy between Marx and Darwin was a joke. I have no explanation to offer why Engels turned the joke into something of a dogma, but I felt the fact worth recording. Mr. Lewis does not seem to be aware of the origin of Engels' dictum (which figures also very prominently in the various editions of Marx's and Engels' *Selected Works*), and in his letter he prudently prefers to ignore it. But surely knowing this would put Marx's own contribution to 19th-century intellectual history in a more adequate perspective. I hope Mr. Lewis would agree that the repudiation of Darwin by Marx also helps to bring the humanistic element in Marx into focus and thus assists in overcoming the gap between the "younger" and "older" Marx.

SHLOMO AVINERI

Yale University,
New Haven, Conn.

Literature & Crime

PAMELA HANSFORD JOHNSON'S suggestion in her book *On Iniquity* (echoed by *R* in the May ENCOUNTER) that it is desirable to suppress any book or play "that will lead to a single sadistic murder" overlooks some of the more notable crimes of our day. Fredric Wertham in *The Show of Violence* describes how Albert Fish who killed at least five young children and tortured or sexually abused perhaps hundreds of others was motivated, led to the crimes by the Biblical story of Abraham and Isaac:

> "I had sort of an idea through Abraham offering his son Isaac as a sacrifice. It always seemed to me that I had to offer a child for sacrifice, to purge myself of iniquities, sins, and abominations in the sight of God."

After newspaper reports of the Cutter slaying in Kansas were widely circulated (see Capote's *In Cold Blood*) an almost precise duplication of the crime took place in Florida. Heinrich Pommerenke, a mass slayer of women in Germany, went straight from a viewing of the dancing scenes in Cecil B. de Mille's *The Ten Commandments* (which confirmed his view that women were the source of the world's trouble) to commit his first murder. John George Haigh who sucked his victims' blood through soda straws first thought of becoming a vampire after watching the "voluptuous" procedure—the drinking of the wine in an Anglican High Church Service.

Are we to ban the Bible, cease all newspaper reporting of crime, censor all movies showing dancing women or remove the Eucharist from all church ceremonies because some sick mind claims to have found inspiration for murder in such material? Either we must recognise that it is futile to ban only de Sade if we want to remove all possible literary triggers to murder among the seriously disturbed, or we must look elsewhere to unearth the causes of homicide. *R* assumes quite casually that the reading of de Sade led to the Moors murders: "it seems to me highly unlikely that *Justine* . . . did not influence [Brady's] actions in the most direct and practical way" since his books "profoundly affected his feelings, his ideas and his attitude to life." We are quick to take a murderer's word that there was one final literary model for his crime because we wish to discover some single controllable cause for such events. But is it not more likely that a murderous impulse is of long standing, having deeper roots and more profound influences than a book or a series of books? *Justine* was no more the essential cause of the Moors murders than *Thus Spake Zarathustra* or *Der Stürmer* was the essential cause of the massacre of the Jews.

The various psychological studies made of the problems (which *R* would like to have cited to him) support this view. Robert B. Cairns, James C. N. Paul, and Julius Wishner of the University of Minnesota reviewed all the experimental studies in an article ("Sex Censorship: The Assumptions of Anti-Obscenity Laws and the Empirical Evidence," 46 *Minnesota Law Review* 1009 [1962]). Their conclusions support Bernard Levin's doubt about any relation between *reading* and *doing*. The most that could be said is that reading of obscenity may bring about sexual arousal. But there has been no showing that such arousal may lead to criminal conduct. In fact they conclude that

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"obscene materials provide a way of releasing strong sexual urges without doing harm to others."

Of course the Moors murders were terrible crimes. But the search for the reasons behind such killings cannot stop at what appears—fallaciously I would argue—to be the last link in the chain of events leading to the deaths. The saddest aspect of trying to blame de Sade for these crimes is that society becomes distracted from a more far-reaching inquiry into aggression and its ultimate sources.

LEON FRIEDMAN

New York City

"Personality Explosion"

BERNARD BERGONZI's "Thoughts on the Personality Explosion" [ENCOUNTER, May], in which he appropriates Walter Ong's significant distinction between the New Critical analogy between literature and *objects* or *artifacts* and literature as oral-aural expression, constitutes a catalogue of recent artistic currents that reveals an impressive grasp of the uncertain cultural landscape. But it also constitutes a travesty of Father Ong's personalism.

According to Mr. Bergonzi, Ong's distinction points to the decline of the view of art as visual object and the rise of the view of art as *performance* and thus to the emergence of *personality* as the prevailing concern of the reader, spectator, or listener and as the radical criterion of artistic evaluation. For Ong, on the other hand, the distinction between the visual or plastic metaphor and the oral-aural metaphor and his recommendation, however tentative, that critics (especially of literature) encounter works of art as oral expression, derives from Martin Buber's (and Gabriel Marcel's) distinction between the *I-It* and the *I-Thou* relationship. His personalism, therefore, does not, as Mr. Bergonzi distinctly implies, create the imperative to discuss art as performance but rather to confront art as *dialogue*. The ontology of performance is precisely that of the *It*. The transformation of Ong's quite deliberate Buberian ontology of dialogue into its opposite for the sake of illuminating the no doubt very real dangers of the "personality explosion" is surely an act of critical sleight of hand that sacrifices the truth for a "higher" end.

I sympathise with Mr. Bergonzi's fear that the rejection of art as icon in favour of art as performance may result in the absorption of the aesthetic by the affective, in the replacement of art by personality. But I am also convinced that it is quite unfair to imply that Walter Ong's personalism lends itself to this process or, to put it more specifically, that it enhances the worth—and marketability—of Campbell's Soup tins displaying the *signature* of the celebrity Andy Warhol.

What is missing in Mr. Bergonzi's analysis of the decline of the New Critical doctrine of art as artifact is consciousness of the re-emergence of the view of art, especially of literature, as the objectification of temporal sequence (see Lessing's distinction between the plastic and literary arts) and thus as the manifestation of the artist's engagement as an alternative to the view of art as performance. And this omission distorts his diagnosis of the predicament he is confronting. As a corrective to Mr. Bergonzi's essay, I recommend Nathan A. Scott's essay "Mimesis and Time in Modern Literature," in his *The Broken Center: Studies in the Theological Horizons of Modern Literature* (1966).

WILLIAM V. SPANOS

State University of New York, Binghamton, N.Y., U.S.A.

I WOULDN'T WANT to be thought of as travestying Walter Ong, whom I very much admire, and I'm sorry if my essay gave that impression. It is true that I did not go very far in the direction of expounding Ong's Buberian personalism and his interest in dialogue, since that would have taken me some way from my immediate concern, which was simply to look at the way the concept of "personality" is used at all levels of our culture. My primary starting point in Ong was his essay "The Jinnee in the Well-Wrought Urn," where he explicitly talks about the distinction between the artifact and the personality, and which I found very helpful in elaborating my approach. It would certainly be wrong to imply that Ong bears any kind of responsibility for the cult of performance or the excesses of the Pop scene, although if one were looking for a strictly non-causal link Marshall McLuhan would surely provide

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one. However, I accept the rebuke Mr. Spanos offers, and I'm grateful for the various tips in his letter, which I shall hope to follow up.

BERNARD BERGONZI

University of Warwick

Flann O'Brien

MR. JOHN WAIN'S ARTICLE on the fiction of Flann O'Brien [ENCOUNTER, July] is perhaps an occasion for paying a tribute to one who first recognised the greatness of *At Swim-Two-Birds*. This was T. M. Ragg, then managing-director of George Routledge & Sons. Ragg published in 1939 a novel by another Irish writer whose genius awaits recognition—the painter J. B. Yeats, overshadowed as a writer by his brother the poet. Ragg also published about the same time the first novels to be translated into English of Simenon (*The Disintegration of J.P.G.*), of Malraux (*Days of Hope*) and of Montherlant (*Pity for Women*) as well as Samuel Beckett's first novel, *Murphy*. I believe most of these books were financial failures, a publisher's usual reward for being courageous.

HERBERT READ

Stonegrave, York

IT MAY BE WORTH pointing out that the late "Flann O'Brien" did in fact write another novel in English not long after the first publication of *At Swim-Two-Birds*. This was twenty years before he wrote *The Hard Life* and *The Dalkey Archive*. This novel was among his papers and, under the title of *The Third Policeman*, will be published here this Autumn. If it hadn't come to light, I too would have felt, like John Wain [ENCOUNTER, July], "saddened that the possibility of a second great book from his pen was now quenched." But since it has, I think we can feel more cheerful.

TIMOTHY O'KEEFFE

MacGibbon & Kee, Ltd.
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INDEX TO VOLUME XXVIII

The Index to Volume XXVIII (January-June 1967) is now available and will be sent, free of charge, on application to ENCOUNTER, 25 Haymarket, London, S.W.1. Standing orders for future indexes can also be accepted.

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AUTHORS

THE first instalment of **Count Harry Kessler's** diary "In the Twenties" appeared last month, when we explained:—A few years ago the diaries of Count Harry Kessler were found: 32 leather-bound notebooks, chronicling the career of the half-Irish half-German aristocrat who was known as "the red Count" and was said to be a son of Kaiser Wilhelm I. Once published in Germany, the book became a strangely significant best-seller for it suddenly seemed to provide a link between the present and the "lost 'twenties," the "vanished age." Kessler was an art patron and book-publisher, diplomat and cosmopolitan, nobleman and radical democrat. He was born in 1868 and was brought up tri-lingually in France, Germany and England; his handsome Irish mother was a favourite at the Hohenzollern court at Potsdam. In his Cranach Press at Weimar, Kessler published the work of many of his friends, including Maillol, George Grosz, and Eric Gill, André Gide, von Hofmannsthal, and Paul Valéry. He knew Shaw, Cocteau, and Brecht, Hauptmann, Diaghilev, and Einstein. He disliked the Wilhelminian monarchy and welcomed the Republican revolution; he hated the Nazis. He left Berlin for Paris in 1933, and died four years later in France at the age of seventy. As one historian has written, "Harry Graf Kessler's diary is one of the richest documents we have of the European 'twenties, that fascinating era of cultural renaissance and political tragedy...." The diary was translated by **Sarah Gainham**....

Nicola Chiaromonte, Italian literary and drama critic, is co-Editor (with Ignazio Silone) of *Tempo Presente* in Rome....

Henry Fairlie's book, *The Life of Politics*, will be published this year by Methuen....

Alasdair MacIntyre (born 1929) was a Fellow of University College, Oxford, and is now Professor of Sociology (Social Philosophy) at the University of Essex. His books include a study of *The Unconscious* (1958) and *A Short History of Ethics* (1966). Among his articles for ENCOUNTER are "Trotsky in Exile" (December 1963), "Pascal and Marx" (October 1964), "Lukács on Thomas Mann" (April 1965) and "The Psycho-Analysts" (May 1965).

Herbert Gold lives in San Francisco. He is the author of *The Age of Happy Problems* (1962) and his most recent novels were *Salt* (1964) and *Fathers* (1967), both published by Secker & Warburg, London and Random House, New York.

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